

NATHAN PETTIT (1775-1855) AND HIS WIFE LEVINA PETTIT OF SPARTANBURG COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND HANCOCK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE LIFE
OF NATHAN PETTIT, THE SON OF JOSHUA
AND RACHEL PETTIT OF SPARTANBURG
COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, HIS LIFE
DURING AND AFTER REVOLUTIONARY
WAR PERIOD SOUTH CAROLINA, AND
MOVEMENT TO VARIOUS POINTS IN THE
NORTHWEST INCLUDING OHIO, ILLINOIS
AND MISSOURI AND THE LIVES OF HIS
CHILDREN.

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NATHAN PETTIT'S CHILDHOOD DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

In the year 1767, a man by the name of Joshua Pettit left his home in New Jersey, traveled up and over Virginia's Shenandoah mountains, and settled his growing family on the wilds of the South Branch of the Potomac River.¹ It was in this area where he likely became acquainted with an infamous Indian trader from Winchester by the name of Richard Pearis. On at least one occasion the two would meet at an ordinary in Romney, Virginia.²

By the 1770s, Pearis, Jacob Hite, and several other Virginians were making arrangements to move to the forbidden lands west of the Indian boundary line in South Carolina.³ In some way or another, this new settlement involved Joshua Pettit. In December of 1773, Joshua Pettit witnessed a massive land deal between Richard Pearis and the Cherokee head men in what would come to be present day Greenville, South Carolina.⁴ The nature of Pettit's business relationship with Pearis is not clear but he acquired 500 acres of land from him after the deed was finalized. He sold this land to a Virginian named John Armstrong sometime in 1775.⁵ Joshua Pettit and his wife Rachel were likely either living on these former Cherokee lands or on Lawsons Fork of the Pacolet River in 96 District when their son Nathan, the subject of this writing, was born on September 12, 1775.^{6,7,8} When Nathan was not yet a year old, the Revolutionary War came roaring into the Carolina back country.

¹ "From Virginia: The Pettit Family of Spartanburg Co., SC", *The Pettit Research Project*, October 2018, <https://pettitresearch.com/familyhistory/2020/08/19/from-virginia-the-pettit-family-of-spartanburg-co-sc/>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Oconostotah, Willinawauh, and Ewe Three Head Men of the Cherokee to George Pearis of said Cherokee Nation, Dec. 21, 1773, South Carolina Public Register, Conveyance Books, Series ST158, Book 5E, p502-505, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

⁵ Petition of Ann Armstrong, 1784, South Carolina General Assembly Committee Reports, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, S165005, 1784, No. 6.

⁶ 1850 U.S. Census, Hancock County, IL, population schedule, p. 364, dwelling 1355, family 1357, Nathan Pettit; NARA microfilm publication M432, Roll 109, National Archives Records Administration, Washington D.C.

⁷ 1880 U.S. Census, Big Creek Township, Taney County, Missouri, population schedule, enumeration district 125, p. 281, dwelling 81, family 81, John W. Pettit; NARA microfilm publication T9, Roll 738, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.; father's birthplace listed as South Carolina.

⁸ "Examining the Henry Pettit Sr. Family Bible Record and the Record of his Father Joshua Pettit (as preserved in the National Archives)", *The Pettit Research Project*, February 2, 2019, <https://pettitresearch.com/familyhistory/2020/08/26/examining-the-henry-pettit-sr-family-bible-record-and-the-record-of-his-father-joshua-pettit-as-preserved-in-the-national-archives/>; An entry that probably corresponds to his birth can be found in the Bible record of his brother Henry Pettit, Sr that is in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

The Pettit family was residing on Lawsons Fork when war broke out in the summer of 1776.⁹ A number of settlers in the surrounding area were slaughtered in a surprise attack by Cherokee warriors on the night of June 30, 1776. John Armstrong, who had moved onto the lands sold to him by Joshua Pettit, was among those who were murdered. Nathan, his pregnant mother, Rachel, and several of his siblings probably took refuge with the other settlers in the newly constructed Wofford's Fort. This fort was built by his father Joshua Pettit under the command of Colonel William Wofford and supplied by Joseph Buffington.^{10,11} Joshua Pettit appears to have had some sort of association with Col. Wofford as he was in his company on other occasions as well.¹² Both Buffington and Wofford had a hand in operating the iron works on Lawsons Fork near where the Pettits lived for a time.¹³ Some have speculated that Joshua Pettit was a skilled carpenter who helped Richard Pearis in the construction of his plantation buildings, William Wofford with his fort and iron works, and may have constructed his own mill near the Pacolet River. Evidence for this is scarce, but the theory is appealing.

In April of 1779, Nathan's father recorded the birth of a daughter named Rachel in a small record book.¹⁴ She was the last in a line of children that included Henry, Joshua Jr, Mary (died young), Benjamin, Nathan, John, Abraham, possibly a Hannah and maybe others who were older.¹⁵

Nathan grew up in back country South Carolina during its most savagely violent period. His older brother Henry Pettit, Sr., and father Joshua defended their homeland while in the Spartan Regiment under Colonel Benjamin Roebuck.^{16,17} Nathan would have been about five years old when the patriot troops under Brigadier General Thomas Sumter stopped by the Pettit farm for provisions. The Pettit family supplied them with beef from their herd.¹⁸

⁹ Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, Henry Pettit #W5528, National Archives Microfilm Publication M804, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington D.C.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Joseph Buffington," A.S. Salley, Accounts Audited of Claims Growing out of the Revolution in South Carolina, (Columbia, SC: Historical Commission of South Carolina by the State company, 1935-) AA 883, Roll 16, p59.

¹² John Nuckols to William Wofford Deed, Charleston Deeds, 1719-1776, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, S372001, Vol B-5, p364-5; Joshua Pettit was a witness to this deed.

¹³ Brooks, Jim S. "The Ironworks on Lawsons Fork." Electronic document, <https://glendalesc.com/ironworks.pdf>, accessed January 27, 2026.

¹⁴ Examining the Henry Pettit Sr. Family Bible Record," *The Pettit Research Project*, Ibid.

¹⁵ "The Full List of Children of Joshua and Rachel Pettit of Spartanburg County, SC Based on the Best Supporting Documentation Available," *The Pettit Research Project*, Accessed 2 February 2026, <https://pettitresearch.com/familyhistory/2021/01/02/the-full-list-of-children-of-joshua-pettit-b1734-and-rachel-pettit-of-spartanburg-sc-based-on-the-best-supporting-documentation-available/>

¹⁶ "Joshua Pettit," A.S. Salley, Accounts Audited of Claims Growing out of the Revolution in South Carolina, (Columbia, SC: Historical Commission of South Carolina by the State company, 1935-) AA 5901, Roll 117, p427-428.

¹⁷ "Henry Pettit," A.S. Salley, Accounts Audited of Claims Growing out of the Revolution in South Carolina, (Columbia, SC: Historical Commission of South Carolina by the State company, 1935-) AA 5900, Roll 117, p412-423.

¹⁸ Ibid.

His brother Henry Pettit was wounded in the battle of Cowpens in January of 1781 and returned home to recover before re-enlisting to fight again. Numerous patriots in Nathan's neighborhood were murdered at their homes when William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham set out on his "Bloody Scout" march in 1780.¹⁹ Joshua Pettit was under Colonel Robert Anderson on the day Charleston fell into British hands on May 12, 1780.²⁰ Nathan saw the injury of his brother, watched the troops show up to his home to be fed, and heard the talk of the murder of nearby patriot men in front of their families. War was not some distant news story. It was there on his doorstep. He would have processed all this turmoil through the eyes of a young boy. It is impossible to know how this affected him but as an adult he certainly possessed the same relentless determination and drive displayed by his brother and father during The War for American Independence.

Nothing else is known about Nathan's father after 1780 and he is presumed to have died not long after. He may have been a casualty of war or may have died after it ended. In any case, records indicate he was deceased prior to September 15, 1786.²¹

It is not known where Nathan and the other young siblings stayed after their father's death, but it is not likely his mother Rachel could have managed the large family on her own. After the demise of his father, Nathan would not emerge on record until the year 1800 when he was an adult with his own family, living near his brother Joshua, Jr., on the Pacolet River.²²

NATHAN PETTIT STARTS A FAMILY

Nathan married a woman named Levina whose maiden name has not been definitively identified.²³ Some online trees have her listed as a McCollugh or McCollum, but no solid corroborating source has been found for this. This theory most likely stems from the cautious research of Mel Brashears that may have been misused by other less diligent family historians. Mr. Brashears is a descendant of Nathan's daughter Jemima Pettit Brashears and inherited a "Hap" McCollum's Bible. He noted that this Bible was in Levina's possession for reasons he did not know. This old Bible lists some McCollum children and would later be

¹⁹ John C. Parker, Jr., *Parker's Guide to the Revolutionary War in South Carolina*, (West Conshohocken, PA, 2013), pp. 4, 6, 23, 158, 292, 293, 296, 298, 299-301, 305, 315, 319, 336, 341-3, 348, 350, 351, 319, 336, 341-343, 348, 350, 351, 367, 373, 386, 387, 393, 397, 406-409, 423, 424, 426, 427, 429, 481, 406-408.

²⁰ Joshua Pettit," A.S. Salley, Accounts Audited, SCDAH, ibid.

²¹ "The Death of Old Joshua Pettit of Spartanburg Co., SC 1780~1786," *The Pettit Research Project*, November 27, 2022, <https://pettitresearch.com/familyhistory/2022/11/27/the-death-of-old-joshua-pettit-of-spartanburg-co-sc-1786/>.

²² 1800 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, South Carolina, population schedule, p. 206, line 19, household of Nathan Pettit; NARA microfilm publication M32, Roll 50, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

²³ Vermilion County, Illinois, Deed Book A: 447, Nathan Pettit and Levina Pettit to Henry Shockey, 21 September 1831, Vermilion County Recorder, Danville, Illinois

used by Nathan's son-in-law Solomon Brashears to record the birth of his own children.^{24,25} Notwithstanding this fact, Mr. Brashears believed Levina was not a McCullum but suspected she may have been the daughter of a man named Jeremiah Clayton. Both the McCollum and the Clayton families lived near the Pettit and Brashears families in South Carolina. Either theory is possible. Mr. Brashears was careful not to declare his hypothesis as fact and neither has sufficient evidentiary support to be conclusive.

Assuming she was Nathan's first and only wife, then they were most likely married sometime before their first child, Jemima Pettit, was born in 1797 in South Carolina.^{26,27,28}

A few years later, in 1800, Nathan's first and oldest son Thomas Pettit was born.^{29,30,31} That year the census showed Nathan Pettit and presumably his wife living in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, with 1 male child (Thomas) and 1 female child (Jemima). He was living near his brother, Joshua Pettit, Jr., and was probably somewhere near the Pacolet River and the Healing Springs at Pooles bend.

A daughter, Rachel Pettit, was born in 1802.^{32,33} She may have been named in honor of Nathan's mother. In 1803 another daughter, Keziah Pettit, entered the world.^{34,35,36}

In 1805 a man who factored heavily into Nathan's early life, William Brashears, obtained a grant for 966 acres in northwest Spartanburg County, near the Greenville County line.³⁷ The

²⁴ See Appendix -Solomon Brashears and Hap McCollum Family Bible

²⁵ Mel Brashears, email message to Brandon Pettit, December 4, 2020. Mel Brashears stated: "Recall, I have in my possession, a McCollum Bible that Levina took with her to Missouri and Solomon Brashears used for his children's birth records after her death in 1838 in Ralls County."

²⁶ 1800 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, South Carolina, household of Nathan Pettit, *ibid*.

²⁷ 1850 U.S. Census, Ralls County, Missouri, population schedule, Enumeration district 73, p.164, dwelling 356, family 361, line 38, household of Solomon Brashears; NARA microfilm publication M432, Roll 411, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C

²⁸ Hancock County, Illinois probate records, ca. 1831-1942; Author: Hancock County (Illinois). Clerk of the Circuit Court; Probate Place: Hancock, Illinois Description Notes: Probate records, Boxes 35-36, 1850s-1860s, pp. 1-112, Nathan Pettit

²⁹ 1800 Census 1800 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, South Carolina, household of Nathan Pettit, *ibid*.

³⁰ 1830 U.S. Census, Butler County, Ohio, population schedule, Milford, p.127 (handwritten), line 21, household of Thomas Pettit; NARA microfilm publication M19, Roll 127, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

³¹ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *Ibid*.

³² 1810 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, South Carolina, population schedule, p. 182B, line 31, household of Nathan Pettit; NARA microfilm publication M252, Roll 61, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C

³³ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *Ibid*.

³⁴ 1810 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, SC, *ibid*.

³⁵ 1850 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, population schedule, Enumeration district 27, p.364A, dwelling 1355, family 1357, line 17, household of Nathan Pettit NARA microfilm publication M432, Roll 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C

³⁶ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *Ibid*.

³⁷ William Beshears, Plat for 966 Acres on Motlows Creek and South Pacolet River, Spartanburg District, State Plat Books (Columbia Series (S213192), Vol 39, p. 455, Item 1, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

land was situated around Motlows Creek. William Brashears established his home there and set up a mill which was powered by the waters of the creek. By March of 1808, Nathan Pettit had relocated to the Motlows Creek area. He is mentioned that year as a neighbor in the deed of sale of fifty acres in the area from George Campbell to Samuel Fowler.³⁸ On September 25, of the same year Nathan Pettit along with William Brashears witnessed a deed between George Alexander and John Owens for land on both sides of Motlows Creek.³⁹

In 1809 another daughter, Catherine Pettit, was born.^{40,41,42} There is roughly a six-year gap between the births of Catherine and his previous child Keziah. Often a space of this nature between the births of children in this time period indicates pregnancy or birth complications.

The following year after Catherine's birth, on February 19, 1810, Nathan Pettit became the owner of 250 acres of Motlows Creek land which he bought from Hugh Ewing.⁴³ This was a portion of the tract that was originally granted to John Clayton in 1785.^{44,45} In the same deed he also bought 20 acres adjoining this tract from Hugh Ewing which was part of a 1785 grant to Robert Goodgion.⁴⁶

The 1810 Spartanburg census shows Nathan living near William Brashears. In Nathan's home were: 1 female age 10-16 (Catherine), 3 females under 10 (Jemima, Rachel, Keziah), and 1 seriously outnumbered male child under the age of 10 (Thomas).⁴⁷

In 1812, a second son was born and named after his father, Nathan Pettit, Jr.^{48,49} In 1814 the family welcomed another baby boy, John W. Pettit.^{50,51}

³⁸ Spartanburg Deeds, Book M, pp. 385-386, Roll C603, South Carolina Department of Archives and History

³⁹ Spartanburg Deeds, Book O, p. 78, Roll C604, South Carolina Department of Archives and History

⁴⁰ 1810 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, SC, *ibid*.

⁴¹ 1840 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, population schedule, p 222A, line 15, household of Hampton Loftis; NARA microfilm publication M704, Roll 60, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

⁴² Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *Ibid*.

⁴³ Spartanburg Deeds, Book P, pp. 54-55, Roll C604, South Carolina Department of Archives and History

⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

⁴⁵ John Clayton, Plat For 255 Acres on Mottleys Creek, Ninety-Six District, State Plat Books (Columbia Series (S213190), Vol 4, p. 241, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

⁴⁶ Robert Goodgion, Plat for 491 Acres on Mottlow Creek, Ninety Six District, State Plat Books (Columbia Series (S213190), Vol 1, p 175, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Note that the deed says this grant occurred on June 6, 1785, but the grant is dated November 10, 1784.

⁴⁷ 1810 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, SC, *ibid*.

⁴⁸ 1850 U.S. Census, Hancock County, IL, *ibid*.

⁴⁹ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *Ibid*.

⁵⁰ 1870 U.S. Census, Sullivan County, Missouri, population schedule, Liberty Township, p. 19, dwelling 127, family 127, line 2, household of John Pettit NARA microfilm publication M593, Roll 822, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

⁵¹ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *Ibid*.

Nathan Pettit fathered another son in 1815 and named him Aaron Pettit.^{52,53} All evidence points towards his birthplace being South Carolina^{54,55} although the 1880 census strangely states he was born in Kentucky.

On December 10, 1816, Nathan became a grandfather. His oldest daughter Jemima Pettit had a baby of her own.⁵⁶ She had married Solomon Brashears, son of William Gowan Brashears.⁵⁷ The chosen name of their firstborn son was an interesting one apparently intended to honor Jemima's grandfather: Joshua Pettit Brashears.⁵⁸

On December 1, 1818, Nathan witnessed a land deed from John Sloan to James Loftis.⁵⁹ The land was on both sides of Holston Creek, of the South Pacolet River. Holston Creek feeds into Motlows Creek just before it enters the Pacolet. At least one Loftis family apparently set up residence somewhere near the Pettit family on Motlows Creek and the families would soon be intertwined.

The 1820 census of Spartanburg County shows only one Nathan Pettit but his age and those of his children do not align with those of the Nathan/Levina family.⁶⁰ This is his nephew, the son of Joshua Pettit, Jr. The absence of Nathan Pettit on the 1820 census is peculiar but may be due to him being enumerated under the wrong surname. Seven pages earlier, a Nathan "Pruatt" was recorded. The ages of the people in his household match perfectly with those that would be expected to be found in Nathan and Levina Pettit's household. However, this is three pages and several names before the neighborhood where he is believed to have lived.

On that page where he would have been expected, page 41, Solomon Brashears and his family, including Jemima Pettit Brashears, were recorded. They were next to another

⁵² 1880 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, population schedule, Rocky Run Township, p. 6B, enumeration district (ED) 79, family 50, Aaron. Pettit; NARA microfilm publication T9, Roll 211 NARA, Washington D.C.

⁵³ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, Ibid.

⁵⁴ 1860 U.S. Census, Knox County, Missouri, population schedule, Edina, p. 127, dwelling 915, family 888, line 26, household of Aaron Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M653, Roll 627, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

⁵⁵ 1900 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, population schedule, Warsaw Township, Enumeration district 17, p. 325A, dwelling 269, family 277, line 47, household of Ellen Burch, NARA microfilm publication T623, Roll 305, NARA, Washington D.C.

Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, Ibid.

⁵⁶ *Find A Grave*, database and images (https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/48185924/joshua_pettit-brashears : accessed 1 January 2026), memorial page for Joshua Pettit Brashears (10 Dec 1816–18 Jan 1879), Find A Grave Memorial no. 48185924, citing Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery, New London, Ralls County, Missouri. Maintained by Anne Wagner; Birth date shown on gravestone.

⁵⁷ Spartanburg Deeds, Book CC, pp. 284-285, South Carolina Department of Archives and History; Solomon Beshears gave John Wood power of attorney to sell 100 acres "willed to me by my father". Property conveyed was William Brashears' land on Motlows Creek. Signed by Solomon Brashears and Jemima Brashears.

⁵⁸ See Appendix -Solomon Brashears and Hap McCollum Family Bible; Family Bible of Solomon Brashears and Jemimah Pettit (1797-1857), privately held by Mel Brashears, San Jose, California.

⁵⁹ Spartanburg Deeds, Book U, pp. 440-441, Roll C606, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

⁶⁰ 1820 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, South Carolina, population schedule, p. 440B, line 6, household of Nathan Pettit; NARA microfilm publication M33, Roll 120, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

Brashears whose first name is illegible. Next to Solomon is Samuel Fowler, the man whose 1808 land deed mentioned Nathan Pettit as a neighboring landowner. Next to Samuel Fowler is John J. Seay and next to him is a woman named Salley McCollum. Mrs. McCollum's proximity to Jemima Pettit Brashears fuels speculation that there may indeed be a McCollum connection to the Pettit family.

Five years after their child Aaron was born, Nathan's family welcomed one last child, Hannah Pettit, born in 1820.^{61,62} Nathan was about 45 years at the time, and his wife Levina was just a little younger than he.

Altogether, Nathan fathered the following children in South Carolina (birthdates approximate):

1. Jemima 1797
2. Thomas 1800
3. Rachel 1802
4. Keziah 1803
5. Catherine 1809
6. Joseph 1810
7. Nathan 1812
8. John W. 1814
9. Aaron 1815
10. Hannah 1820

In March of 1821, a Nathan Pettit was dismissed by Cedar Springs Baptist Church to help form Bethesda Church near Pooles Bend on the Pacolet River. He was ordained as a deacon along with Anthony Crocker, R. C. Pool, and James Haynes.⁶³ This could have been Nathan born 1775 or Nathan the son of Joshua, Jr., who would have been 29.⁶⁴ Oddly enough, neither man lived very close to the parent church they were dismissed from but Nathan, the son of Joshua Pettit and Judith Poole, was certainly the closer of the two.

The deed that Nathan Pettit witnessed in 1818 between John Sloan and James Loftis was presented to the Justice of the Peace in Spartanburg County by Nathan Pettit on February 18,

⁶¹ 1860 U.S. Census, Marion County, Missouri, population schedule, Round Grove Township, p. 53, dwelling 372, family 364, line 26, household of William H. Martin, NARA microfilm publication M653, Roll 633, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

⁶² Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *ibid*.

⁶³ Bethesda Baptist Church, Spartanburg County; Inventory of Church Archives, Works Progress Administration Survey of State and Local Historical Records, Taylor, Jean L.; Manuscripts Division, South Carolinian Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, p. 2.

⁶⁴ 1870 U.S. Census, Calhoun County, Alabama, population schedule, Election Precinct 6, Peaks Hill, p. 4, dwelling 22, family 22, line 1, household of Nathan Pettit NARA microfilm publication M593, Roll 822, NARA, Washington D.C.

1823. Nathan gave the standard affidavit and signed with his mark. He, like most men of his day, could not write.

Nathan's oldest son Thomas Pettit would marry a woman named Nancy and in October of 1828 she gave birth to a son, Austin Pettit, in South Carolina.^{65,66,67,68,}

On January 13, 1829, Nathan sold his 225 acre tract of land on Motlows Creek to James Birchfield for \$250 –the same price he paid for it nearly 19 years prior.⁶⁹ After disposing of his land, Nathan Pettit would set his eyes on the new turnpike that led northwest over the Blue Ridge Mountains and never grace the records of his Carolina home again.

THE NEW ROAD TO THE NEW FRONTIER

In 1828 the Buncombe Turnpike was completed.⁷⁰ This much needed road connected the Greenville, South Carolina area to the Tennessee/North Carolina line. Passing through the Saluda Gap in South Carolina and climbing to Asheville, travelers had a safe route that was a significant improvement over the old drover's path. At his farm in northwestern Spartanburg County, Nathan Pettit may have encountered many travelers coming from distant points in the north and west. Places like Lexington, Kentucky and Cincinnati, Ohio could now be reached by wagon for Nathan. At least one member of the nearby Brashears family had already relocated to Ralls County, Missouri, by 1827.⁷¹ There may have been others who migrated from the Motlows Creek neighborhood who returned with encouraging stories of the fertile lands in the west.

⁶⁵ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *ibid*; Mistakenly called "Oscar" instead of Austin.

⁶⁶ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the Circuit Clerk, Carthage, Illinois, Chancery Records, Volume F, 1857-1859, Family History Library Film 955136, Roll 53, Image Group 8566288, Item 1, Filmed 12 Mar 1974, pp. 125, 149; images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3QY-4S64-T>).

⁶⁷ 1850 U.S. Census, Butler County, Ohio, population schedule, Oxford Township, p. 445, household 803, family 838, line 14, household of Nancy VanHorn, NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 663, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.; Nancy VanHorn was Thomas Pettit's widow who married James VanHorn. James had also died by the time of the 1850 census.

⁶⁸ 1880 U.S. Census, Pike County, Illinois, population schedule, Atlas Township, Enumeration district 179, p. 16, dwelling 129, family 132, Aaron Pettit, NARA microfilm publication T9, Roll 244 National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

⁶⁹ Spartanburg Deeds, Conveyance Book V, pp. 88-89, Roll C606, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

⁷⁰ "The Buncombe Turnpike," A North Carolina History Online Resource, 2004, <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/buncombe-turnpike>

⁷¹ Walter Williams, *A History of Northwest Missouri, Volume 3* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1915), p. 1991; Thomas Alexander Brashear biography.

It is not clear what motivated Nathan Pettit to leave. He had lived in his Motlows Creek home for over twenty years. Ten children had been born there and now they were coming into adulthood and having children of their own. Perhaps Nathan assessed his place and realized it could not support subsequent generations of his family. Perhaps his crop land was played out and the untouched lands over the mountains enticed him.

The precise route chosen over the mountains is not known but can be estimated. Given his proximity to Greenville, it is probable that Nathan took the route north from Greenville to Asheville, North Carolina on the Buncombe Turnpike. From there the road would have taken them to Tennessee. Moving through Knoxville they would continue on to Lexington, Kentucky and eventually enter Cincinnati, Ohio from the south. Just north and west of Cincinnati was Butler County, Ohio –their first place of rest. It is said this was a popular staging area for people intending to go further west but it was also a nice place to settle down.

Depending on the method of transport, either ox or horse, and enumerable other factors, this trip would have likely taken well over a month. At the time of his departure in the spring of 1829, at least three of Nathan's children were married. Thomas and his wife Nancy had a son named Austin who was just a few months old. Jemima was married to Solomon Brashears, and they had a quickly expanding family. Nathan's daughter Catherine Pettit had married Hampton Loftis.

Family members likely in the caravan that departed South Carolina in 1829 included:

- Nathan Pettit and his wife Levina.
- Thomas Pettit, his wife Nancy and their 5-6 month old son Austin.
- Hampton Loftis and his wife Catherine Pettit who may have been pregnant.
- All the rest of Nathan's children except Jemima Brashears. Their family remained in Spartanburg County for a brief time. They were enumerated there in the 1830 census.
- Possibly a William Pettit from Spartanburg County and his wife and at least two or three children.

By late spring of 1829, the party had made it from South Carolina to Butler County, Ohio. They rested there long enough to be counted by the tax assessor who made his rounds between March and May. That year Nathan Pettit appeared on the duplicate tax rolls for personal property in Butler County along with Thomas Pettit and a mysterious William Pettit.^{72,73} Nathan was taxed for five horses valued at \$200 and one head of cattle. His son

⁷² Tax Record Butler County (Ohio), Ohio Historical Society Library in Franklin County, Auditor of the State, Volume 161, Year 1829, Family History Library Film 514156, Roll 1900, Filmed 28 Dec 1966, p. 472, images, Image Group 4849016, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9PP6-SB2>); Entry for Nathan Pettit.

⁷³ Tax Record Butler County (Ohio), Ohio Historical Society Library in Franklin County, Auditor of the State, Volume 161, Year 1829, Family History Library Film 514156, Roll 1900, Filmed 28 Dec 1966, p. 459, images, Image Group 4849016, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GPP6-3FB>); Entries for William Pettit and Thomas Pettit.

Thomas had one horse as did the nearby William Pettit. Nathan was recorded in the town of Oxford while Thomas and William appeared close by in the town of Milton. Oxford was already home to a school of higher education, Miami University, founded there in 1809. Though we do not know if Butler County was originally planned as their final destination or a place to rest and regroup, they probably stayed there through the winter of 1829-1830.

THE PETTIT HOME IN VERMILION COUNTY, ILLINOIS

By late spring of 1830, Nathan Pettit and company had pulled up stakes again and pushed about two hundred miles west into Vermilion County, Illinois.⁷⁴ Evidently, Thomas Pettit found some reason to remain behind in Milford with his wife and son. He, his wife Nancy, and son Austin are counted there in the 1830 census.⁷⁵ On May 24, 1830, Nathan Pettit and his wife Levina received a grant of 80 acres of land in Vermilion County, Illinois, in Section 32, Township 20 North, Range 12 West.⁷⁶

By the time the census was conducted in August of 1830, Nathan had settled into the Oakwood area of Vermilion County and his son-in-law Hampton Loftis was enumerated next door.⁷⁷ Next to Loftis was a mysterious William Pettit who was much younger than Nathan but also not one of his children. The occupants of Nathan's home and their recorded ages indicate he had two young children in his home that were not his. They may have been a grandson and granddaughter.

The United States Geological Survey land grid system was used to describe the location of Nathan's property in the grant. From this it can easily be pinpointed on the map today. His parcel was about a mile and a half southeast of Newtown, Illinois, and was cut in two by the Middle Branch of the Vermilion River. An 1850 Vermilion County map notes that this area

⁷⁴ 1830 U.S. Census, Vermilion County, Illinois, population schedule, p. 224, line 26, household of Nathan Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M19, Roll 25, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

⁷⁵ 1830 U.S. Census, Butler County, Ohio, population schedule, Milford Township, p. 127, line 21, household of Thomas Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M19, Roll 126, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

⁷⁶ Nathan Pettit (Vermilion County, Illinois) homestead patent no 1914. (16 May 1831), General Land Office Records, Accession Nr IL0360__422, US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.

⁷⁷ "Charlotte A. Volkel et al., *Tax and Land Records, Vermilion County, State of Illinois*, (Danville: Illiana Genealogical Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 45.; "Pettit, Nathan oak 30".

was covered in white oak forests.⁷⁸ It would have been thick with timber suitable for milling, and maybe good for some crops. Being in a basin and cut from north to south by a river, most of the land would have been subject to flooding. Nathan may have bought the property, sight unseen, or he may have had intentionally purchased this section of river for use as a power supply. At one point later in life, Nathan would call himself a miller and that may have been a skill he already possessed at this time. He had plenty of opportunities to have learned the trade before coming to Illinois.

When living on Motlows Creek in South Carolina his neighbor William Brashears operated Brashears Mill which was substantial enough to have made its way onto the 1825 *Mills Atlas*.⁷⁹ Nathan's brothers Henry and Joshua operated a mill on Pettit's branch of the Pacolet River while Nathan lived nearby.⁸⁰ There is evidence his brother John or one of his sons operated a mill on Pole Bridge Branch of the Pacolet.⁸¹ Nathan's son John W. was also listed as a miller on the 1870 census.⁸² Suffice to say it is possible Nathan intended to set up a mill on this Oakwood, Illinois, property.

When Nathan settled this area, it was sparsely populated but quite perilous –not unlike the South Carolina of his childhood. Black Hawk, a chief of the Sauk and Fox Indians was displeased with previous treaties that ceded tribal lands and forced the nation to live west of the Mississippi River. Tensions between the US government and Black Hawk culminated with military action in 1831 in which volunteers burned deserted Indian villages on the east side of the river. By 1832, Illinois had raised a militia and engaged in what would become known as the Black Hawk War. Vermilion County supplied a company of mounted rangers to protect the settlers against raids.

Though he probably never knew about it or had any use for it, many years later coal was discovered on Nathan's property. The seams were shallow. Strip-mining operations deeply gouged out the land leaving open pits. After coal lost its marketability in the early 1900s the land was left scarred and mostly unusable. Eventually, the state of Illinois would come to possess it as well as hundreds of other acres of surrounding land. Today it has been repurposed as a wildlife refuge and nature preserve.

As Nathan and his family settled into their new home in eastern Illinois and eyed the Indian trouble brewing to the west, back in South Carolina his daughter Jemima and her husband

⁷⁸ American Geographical Society Library Digital Map Collection, "Map of Vermilion County, Ills. & Ind. / compiled 1850 by John Wilson survr. from the United States Survey, Klauprech & Menzel's Lith," Accessed July 18, 2025, <https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/agdm/id/21117>

⁷⁹ South Carolina Digital Library, "Atlas of the State of South Carolina by Robert Mills," Accessed February 25, 2026, <https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/rma/id/100/rec/1>

⁸⁰ Joshua Pettit Will, Spartanburg District, SC., South Carolina Will Transcripts, Microcopy No. 9, Series S108093, Reel 0024, Frame 00287, (Will Book B, Page 136, February 15, 1828), S.C. Department of Archives and History.

⁸¹ Spartanburg Deeds, Book MM 1874-1876, p. 196, South Carolina Department of Archives and History; Deed of sale for Aaron Templeman to W. M. Foster describes Nathan Pettit's (son of John 1771) line to the mill pond.

⁸² 1870 U.S. Census, Sullivan County, MO, household of John Pettit, *ibid*.

Solomon Brashears had made the decision to move as well. An old Brashears family note says that Solomon Brashears with his family and his brother William Brashears departed South Carolina on November 15, 1830.⁸³ Their destination was Ralls County, Missouri. According to the note, they left from South Carolina in a wagon and made it just east of St. Louis to a place called Edwardsville, Illinois. There they would be stopped short of their goal, trapped by brutally harsh weather for four months.

“THE WINTER OF THE DEEP SNOW”

The weather in early 1829 had been favorable for the western migration of Nathan Pettit. The winter of 1829-1830 was mild. The fall of 1830 was also pleasant. As Nathan's daughter Jemimah and her family set out for Missouri they no doubt prayed these good conditions would persist all the way to Ralls County. And indeed, they almost did. But as they approached Edwardsville, Illinois, and the Mississippi River was almost within sight, a cold rain began to fall.

From December 20 to Christmas Eve of 1830 the icy rain continued to pelt the area. Then from December 29-31 a three-day snowstorm in the region dumped 3-4 feet of snow. A roaring wind created snow drifts 15-20 feet high. The storm was followed by an ice storm that left a layer of ice on top thick enough “to bear a man.”⁸⁴ This was capped off with another four or more inches of snow. On January 1, 1831, the temperature in the area fell to -15 degrees. Snow continued for the rest of January with the temperature remaining below freezing on all but five days. Another blizzard blanketed the area on February 2, 1831.

Food became scarce. Livestock froze. There were reports of turkeys freezing to death while roosting in trees. Deer were unable to forage in the deep snow and died. Wolves preyed on the struggling animals. Some settlers disappeared and their bodies were not discovered until the snow melted in the spring.

While the Brashears family was forced to ride out the winter in Edwardsville, Nathan Pettit and his family experienced similar conditions at his new home in Oakwood, Illinois. It was

⁸³Mel Brashears, “Note Found in Sarah Jo's Files Written by Some Unknown Member of the Family” Handwritten note, No Date, Personal Files of Mel Brashears, San Jose, CA 95138; Per Mel: this note may have been written by Aunt Ella Brashears Kerr (granddaughter of Jemima Pettit). Note reads in part, “Solomon Brashears with his family left South Carolina, Nov 15, 1830 (their twins Uncle Doc & Uncle Bill being one year old that day) & came through in a wagon -landed in Edwardsville -Illinois in the fall when a snow (three feet) fell & they remained there all winter...”

⁸⁴ “The Deep Snow,” *The Illinois Intelligencer*, January 28, 1968.

not until February 21 that the weather relented with a high temperature reaching a much-welcomed 39 degrees.

On May 1, 1831, Solomon Brashears and his family crossed the mighty Mississippi River at Alton, Illinois, and made their way north to Ralls County, Missouri.⁸⁵ They settled five miles west of New London on a heavily wooded tract of land by the Salt River.⁸⁶ Just fifteen days later, on May 16, Nathan Pettit's land in Vermilion County, Illinois, was officially patented and he did not delay in disposing of it.

After spending just over a year on their new homestead, on September 21, 1831, Nathan and his wife Levina sold their Illinois land to neighboring landowner Henry Shockey.⁸⁷ Nathan pocketed \$250 for this 80-acre tract –the same price he received for his 225 acres in Spartanburg County in 1829. Both Nathan and Levina were present in Vermilion County to sign the deed with their marks before the Justice of the Peace. Sometime shortly after this, Nathan and his family moved to Missouri to live near his son-in-law Solomon Brashears.

The families were reunited and were able to enjoy each other's company in Ralls County for a few years before Levina Pettit was taken away from them. Someone made a note in the family Bible of Solomon Brashears that stated, "Mother Pettit died on December 20, 1834".⁸⁸ That following spring, in 1835, Nathan, now a widower, was stirred once more to uproot his family and move.⁸⁹

The Mississippi River that formed the border between Missouri and Illinois was about fifteen miles to the east of the Brashears homestead. Nathan settled in a place approximately forty-five miles upriver and on the opposite side. He made his new home in a place called Rocky Run in Hancock County, Illinois. There, at the age of sixty, he would set up a farm and a mill on a small creek with no name.

LIFE AT PETTIT CREEK

In 1835, Nathan Pettit set up a home, erected a barn, and built a mill on a plot of land in Hancock County, Illinois.⁹⁰ The soil was perfect for corn and wheat which they planted and

⁸⁵ Mel Brashears, "Note Found in Sarah Jo's Files," Ibid.

⁸⁶ Henry Sinclair Brashear, *The Brashear--Brashears Family 1449-1929* (Texarkana, Arkansas-Texas: Self-published, 1929), pp 93-94.

⁸⁷ Vermilion County, Illinois, Deed Book A: 447, Nathan Pettit and Levina Pettit to Henry Shockey, 21 September 1831, Vermilion County Recorder, Danville.

⁸⁸ See Appendix -Solomon Brashears and Hap McCollum Family Bible.

⁸⁹ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *ibid*; "Aaron Pettit. In 1835 we moved to this county..."

⁹⁰ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *ibid*.

harvested in abundance. He also did very well raising hogs.⁹¹ After years of wandering, it seemed the restless settler had finally found his land of milk and honey.

The home site was most likely near the section line road on the northeast corner of the tract.⁹² The mill was situated on the creek that passed through the southeastern tip of the Pettit land. A public road ran by the mill and still follows the same path today. The mill was a grist mill, used primarily for grinding grain and making flour or cornmeal. It was used not only by the Pettits but also by other nearby family farms. Neighbors associated the Pettit's mill with the creek that supplied its power which quickly became known as "Pettit Creek."

A man of about 25 years of age in 1835, Joseph Pettit, may have been one of the driving forces behind his father's move to Hancock County. In August of 1835 he purchased 80 acres of land and another 80-acre tract a month later.⁹³ Edson Witney financed the second purchase and carried a mortgage on the land of \$100 for one year.⁹⁴ On July 6, 1837, Joseph and his bride Nancy B. Martin were the first two people to be joined in marriage in nearby Walker township.⁹⁵ The Reverend George Walker officiated. On October 27, 1837, Joseph Pettit sold his father, Nathan, both his 80-acre tracts for \$350.⁹⁶

Nathan's son John W. also wasted no time branching out in the new home. He married Isabella Martin on the tenth of November in 1836 before David Hide, the Justice of the Peace.⁹⁷ Evidently Isabella did not survive more than three years. John was single again

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Holmes & Arnold, and Charles Shober. *Map of Hancock County, Illinois*. [Illinois: Holmes & Arnold, Civil Engineers and Map Publishers, 1859] Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2013593101/>

⁹³ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Land Book, Vol 109, 1817-1856, Family History Library Film 954296, Roll 75, Image Group 7943175, Filmed 15 Feb 1974, pp. 147, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSZF-19WF-M>); Entries for Joseph Pettit.

⁹⁴ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Records Volume B, 1835-1836, Family History Library Film 954192, Roll 15, Image Group 8320183, Filmed 1 Feb 1974, pp. 29-30, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSR1-PV6F>); Deed of Joseph Pettit to Edson Whitney.

⁹⁵ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Records Volume A-1, 1829-1849, Family History Library Film 954177, Roll 2, Image Group 4661306, Filmed 29 Jan 1974, p. 18, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-V19K-6H>); Joseph Pettit marriage to Nancy B. Martin.

⁹⁶ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Record Book, Volume 10E, 1837-1838, pp. 163-164; Joseph Pettit to Nathan Pettit.

⁹⁷ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Certificates, Family History Library Film 91390246, Roll 145, Filmed 11 Dec 1987, pp. 507-511, images, Image Group 4661406, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-KQHH-T>); John Pettit marriage to Isabella Martin.

when he had his cattle mark recorded in the county record book on October 5, 1839.⁹⁸ The next day he married Lydia Martin with minister Isaiah Guyman performing the ceremony.⁹⁹

Back in Ohio where Nathan's eldest son Thomas had tarried, a second son, Benjamin F. Pettit, was born in June of either 1835 or 1836.^{100,101,102,103,104} Sometime, most likely in 1836, Thomas Pettit died leaving his widow Nancy with the two Pettit boys behind.¹⁰⁵

Nathan and his son Joseph, who had come to manage the farm, were involved in a handful of legal suits recorded in the Hancock County circuit court record books. In March of 1839, Nathan Pettit sued Joseph Steven for wrongfully taking a horse from him valued at \$100. Witnesses named in the suit for Nathan's case included Erastus Darby, Jeremiah Bently, Hampton Loftis, Nathan Pettit, Jr., John Pettit, and Aaron Pettit.¹⁰⁶ The case was appealed in 1841 and the judgment against Stevens upheld.¹⁰⁷

On May 5, 1841, Stephen Owen sued Erastus W. Darby, Jeremiah Bartley, Hampton Loftis, and Joseph Pettit for trespass.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁸ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marks and Brands, Family History Library Film 954296, Roll 75, Image Group 4661407, Filmed 15 Feb 1974, p. 357, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSZF-19WL-Q>); "John Pettit with smooth cropp off the left and a swallow fork in the right ear."

⁹⁹ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Certificates, Family History Library Film 91390246, Roll 145, Filmed 11 Dec 1987, pp. 1038, images, Image Group 4661406, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-KQQ9-M>); John Pettit marriage to Liddy Martin.

¹⁰⁰ 1850 U.S. Census, Butler County, Ohio, population schedule, Oxford Township, p. 815, household 432, family 432, line 16, household of Dr. Joel Fithian showing Benj. F. Pettet, NARA microfilm publication M432, Roll 663, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁰¹ 1860 U.S. Census, Edgar County, Illinois, Simms Township, population schedule, p. 109, dwelling 777, family 742, line 5, household of Nancy C Vanhorn showing Benjamin F. Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M653, Roll 176, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁰² 1880 U.S. Census, Highland Township, Guthrie County, Iowa, population schedule, p. 5, dwelling 34, family 39, household of B. F. Pettit, NARA microfilm publication T9, Roll 342, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁰³ 1900 U.S. Census, Polk County, Iowa, population schedule, Des Moines Township, Enumeration district 69, p.22B, dwelling 464, family 451, line 93, household of Benjamin Pettit, NARA microfilm publication T623, Roll 305, NARA, Washington D.C.

¹⁰⁴ 1910 U.S. Census, Los Angeles County, California, population schedule, Los Angeles township, precinct 184, p. 5B, dwelling 139, family 148, line 83, household of William J. Tracy showing father-in-law Benjamin F. Pettit, NARA microfilm publication T623, Roll 305, NARA, Washington D.C.

¹⁰⁵ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *ibid.*; "one or two heirs."

¹⁰⁶ Hancock County (Illinois), Circuit Clerk of the Circuit Court, Carthage, Illinois, Civil and Criminal Files, Item 1, Family History Library Film 1521253, Roll 49, Image Group 7635673, Filmed 14 Oct 1987, pp. 92-112, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9LH-HN1N>).

¹⁰⁷ Hancock County (Illinois), Circuit Clerk of the Circuit Court, Carthage, Illinois, Circuit Court Record, Volume B, 1838-1840, Family History Library Film 3523501403, Roll 37, Image Group 8115511, Filmed 7 Mar 1974, p. 70, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSV7-198Y-N>).

¹⁰⁸ Hancock County (Illinois), Circuit Clerk of the Circuit Court, Carthage, Illinois, Civil and Criminal Files, Volume B, 1838-1840, Family History Library Film 1521253, Roll 49, Image Group 7635673, Filmed 14 Oct 1987, p. 299, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9LH-HJ13>).

Nathan Pettit was a defendant in a suit in 1845.¹⁰⁹ O. S. Freeman alleged that a bay horse in Nathan's possession belonged to him. The case went to trial and, on June 20, 1845, the jury found in favor of Pettit. He was awarded costs for the suit as well. Witnesses who testified on his behalf were numerous and included Joseph Caldwell, William Davis, Hampton Loftis, Aaron Pettit, Charles D. Hill, Levi Jones, John Walls, Jeremiah Bently, William Martin, and John Slattery.

The second of the two 80-acre tracts Joseph Pettit purchased was sold to Nathan's son-in-law Solomon Brashears in Ralls County, Missouri on October 27, 1839, for \$100 by Nathan.¹¹⁰ The rationale behind this transaction is not readily apparent but it may have been a simple mortgage financed by Brashears. After the purchase from Nathan Pettit, Solomon remained in Missouri and did not use the land himself. It is also possible there was some arrangement between Solomon and his brother William G. Brashears who had been in Missouri since 1827 and was looking for a change of scenery. The land would later find its way back into Nathan's hands and eventually belong to Joseph before passing to John W.¹¹¹

William G. Brashears fell in with the Pettits for a brief time in Illinois. Years later his family was captured on the 1860 Adair County, Missouri census. All but one of his children show to have been born in Missouri. The exception was Thomas A. Brashears who had an Illinois birthplace. This was Thomas Alexander Brashears who was the subject of a biography in *A History of Northwest Missouri* which gives his birthdate and place of birth as March 30, 1840, in Hancock County, Illinois. If William Brashears family did not move with the Pettits in 1835, they certainly would have been there by 1837. That year Joseph Pettit brought a legal suit against him. The details are lacking but John Pettit, Nathan Pettit, and Hampton Loftis testified on behalf of Joseph and the court decided in his favor. William G. Brashears was ordered to pay Joseph \$13.70.¹¹² The case was appealed and on September 26, 1838, it was "dismissed for want of prosecution." It was also "ordered that the defendant receive of the plaintiff his costs about his suit."¹¹³ William Brashears left Illinois with his wife and children for Missouri in 1841.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Hancock County (Illinois), Circuit Clerk of the Circuit Court, Carthage, Illinois, Civil and Criminal Files, 1844-1846, Item 2, Image Group 4057854, Filmed 14 Oct 1987, pp. 299-350, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9LH-Y6L6>).

¹¹⁰ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Record Book, Volume 10E, 1837-1838, pp. 249-250; Nathan Pettit to Solomon Breshers. Sold E1/2 SW 1/4 S23 3N 9W, 80AC.

¹¹¹ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Record Book, Volume 86, 1870-1871, pp. 15-16; John W. Pettit to Jacob D. Strompt. Sold E1/2 SW 1/4 S23 3N 9W, 80AC.

¹¹² Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Probate Files, Box 5, Item 2, Family History Library Film 81390201, Roll 15, Image Group 8576224, Filmed 21 Sept 1987, pp. 1034-1043, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C37H-1SKZ-R>).

¹¹³ Hancock County (Illinois), Circuit Clerk of the Circuit Court, Carthage, Illinois, Circuit Court Record, Volume B, 1838-1840, Family History Library Film 3523501403, Roll 37, Image Group 8115511, Filmed 7 Mar 1974, p. 35, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSV7-19DS-K>).

¹¹⁴ Walter Williams, *A History of Northwest Missouri, Volume 3* (Chicago, The Lewis Publishing Company, 1915) 1991; This book also gives other genealogical information of note to wit: father William G. Brashear b. Jan 13, 1807,

In 1840 the census taker recorded Nathan Pettit as the only Pettit in this area of Hancock County who was the head of a household. In the home was 1 male age 60-70, one male age 20-30, one male age 15-20, and one female age 15-20. The 60 to 70-year-old was undoubtedly Nathan. The identities of the others are not easy to ascertain. No son of Nathan's would fit in the 15-20 age bracket. There is evidence elsewhere that one family of Pettits had children who, for some reason, went to live with relatives.¹¹⁵ This may have been the case in Nathan's home.

Nathan's youngest daughter Hannah was likely the female age 15-20. She was the youngest daughter and last wed. On June 1, 1843, Hannah married William H. Martin.¹¹⁶ Her brother Nathan Pettit Junior married Polly Ann Zink on February 9, 1843, in Hancock County.¹¹⁷

Around 1844, Keziah and a boy who may have been her son, James, moved in with Nathan Pettit.¹¹⁸ Keziah assumed the duties of managing the home. James was about eight years old and grew up helping the Pettits with the farm.¹¹⁹

TROUBLE IN HANCOCK COUNTY

In 1845 Nathan's name appeared in the *Warsaw Signal* newspaper alongside his son Joseph and son-in-law Hampton Loftis.¹²⁰ Warsaw was the largest town on the route between Rocky Run and Nauvoo and the newspaper was very much an anti-Mormon publication. The Pettit and Loftis families shared the paper's sentiment. The public declaration that was printed in

in Spart. Co., SC, d. May 10, 1862, Adair Co., MO; mother b. Sep 22, 1809, d. Aug 29, 1900. Parents "married in their native community."

¹¹⁵ 1850 U.S. Census, Ralls County, Missouri, population schedule, Enumeration district 73, p.178, dwelling 535, family 540, line 5, household of Merada Brashears; NARA microfilm publication M432, Roll 411, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹¹⁶ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Certificates, Family History Library Film 91390246, Roll 145, Filmed 11 Dec 1987, p. 1653, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-K3S1-63>); William H. Martin marriage to Hannah Pettit.

¹¹⁷ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Records Volume A-1, 1829-1849, Family History Library Film 954177, Roll 2, Image Group 4661306, Filmed 29 Jan 1974, p. 1572, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-V19K-6H>); Nathan Pettit marriage to Polly Ann Zink.

¹¹⁸ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *ibid*; In 1857 Keziah gave a plaintiff statement regarding the estate of Nathan Pettit. She said she had lived with him for 12 years prior to his death and took care of the house.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*.

¹²⁰ "To the Democrats of the State of Illinois," *Warsaw (Illinois) Signal*, 14 May 1845, p. 2.

the paper stated that they, as Democrats, were as much opposed to the Mormons' presence in Hancock County as were their Whig counterparts.

Speaking from a strict historical perspective, since they were self-proclaimed members of the Illinois Democratic Party, it would be safe to assume they did not leave South Carolina over concerns of slavery. While that increasingly divisive issue was not a problem for them in Illinois, they were part of a growing body of residents who were worried about the militarized religious group encamped at Nauvoo. The Mormon issue quickly came to a head. In 1846, the Mormons were expelled from Nauvoo and Hancock County's population was reduced by about 12,000-15,000 residents.

Hampton Loftis shared Nathan Pettit's sympathies. He and his wife Catherine Pettit stayed close to Nathan when they moved to Vermilion County, Illinois, in 1830, and again resided nearby in Hancock County when they moved there. The Loftis family is known to have had the following children before 1847: Lavina, William Daniel, Olive, and Elizabeth. This family is known to have attended New Harmony Baptist Church.¹²¹ This Primitive Baptist church existed for about 35 years, but no complete membership list is extant. It is quite probable that New Harmony was also where Nathan Pettit attended church.

The Pettit and Loftis families would experience an unexpected death in 1847. Nathan's daughter Catherine Pettit Loftis, wife of Hampton died that year. The cause of her death is not known but her illness may have been the reason for the expense charged to Nathan Pettit's account with Doctor Aaron Holden on January 25, 1847.¹²² Nathan paid for a doctor's visit that included medicine, bloodletting, pills, and administration of "sugar of lead". Sugar of lead was a highly toxic compound that was used to treat diarrhea. The illness may have been associated with typhoid fever, cholera, or malaria. Sadly, if this was indeed Catherine who was treated, she probably died in agony due, in part, to her treatment.

For the sake of maintaining his family, Hampton Loftis had to remarry quickly. He wed Rebecca Cobb on April 20, 1848, in Hancock County.¹²³ They had one child, Sarah, who was probably born in 1849.¹²⁴ The union was short lived, however.

¹²¹ Robert Webb, "A Study of New Harmony Church, Colonel Levi Williams, the Militia Companies Under His Command, and the Expulsion of the Mormons from Hancock County, Illinois," n.d., archived 11 Jun 2011 at <https://web.archive.org/web/20110611020414/https://www.carthage.lib.il.us/community/churches/primbap/MormonTrouble.html>

¹²² Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, Ibid.

¹²³ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Records Volume A-1, 1829-1849, Family History Library Film 954177, Roll 2, Image Group 4661306, Filmed 29 Jan 1974, p. 119, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-V19V-P7>); Hampton Loftis marriage to Rebecca Cobb.

¹²⁴ 1850 U.S. Census, Page County, Iowa, population schedule, Enumeration district 22, p. 4, household 268, family 268, line 18, household of Sarah Jackson, NARA microfilm publication M432, Roll 663, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.; Rebecca Loftis in the home of Sarah Jackson with children Frances Loftis and Sarah.

About two miles to the west, the higher lands where the Pettits resided dropped off quickly into the bottom lands of the Mississippi River which were a haven for mosquito breeding and bacteria. The various sloughs emptied into Lima Lake which was a natural marshland that likely contained an abundance of stagnant water. It was drained in the 1930s and turned into farmland.¹²⁵ The mortality schedule for the area tells of deaths due to malaria and typhoid fever with the principal cause of death in Hancock County being cholera.¹²⁶ These are all common killers often due to swampy conditions and this may have been a recurring problem in the community where the Pettits lived as well. In the year 1848, for example, Dr. Aaron Holden made three visits to the Pettit home to treat someone's apparent gastrointestinal illnesses. Then, sometime in September of 1849, Hampton Loftis became sick with "bilious fever".¹²⁷ After a mere ten-day illness, the 38-year-old father passed away. The Loftis children of Catherine Pettit had now lost both of their parents in a matter of three years. The 1850 census reveals where two of the orphan children went.

1850 Hancock County, Illinois, census has the following people in Nathan Pettit's home:

- Nathan Pettit, age 76, born in South Carolina, and his occupation is a miller.
- Daughter Keziah Wells, age 47, born in South Carolina.
- James Wells, age 14 (or 16), born in Missouri.
- Nathan Pettit, Jr., age 35, born in South Carolina
- Joseph Pettit, age 40, also born in South Carolina.
- Daniel Loftis, age 12, born in Illinois.
- Olive Loftis, age 9, born in Illinois.

Hampton died of fever in September 1849 and his son Daniel and daughter Olive were taken in by Nathan. In September of 1850 serious fever had struck and continued to strike the Pettit household. One or multiple occupants with critical fever were treated with "bloodletting and blistering" as well as calomel (mercury compound) on September 3, 4, and 9. On February 10, 1851, some sort of fever plagued them again, and again on May 18, 1851. The doctor's records do not name the specific individual treated, only that it was charged to Nathan's account. It is noteworthy, however, that Nathan Pettit, Jr., cannot be found in any records after the 1850 census and he was considered deceased by 1858 though his death may have occurred much earlier.

¹²⁵ Linda Riggs Mayfield, "Land rich in game later threatened by farm predators," Historical Society of Quincy & Adams County, 29 Apr 2018, <https://www.hsqac.org/land-rich-in-game-later-threatened-by-farm-predators8b1b2a8a/>

¹²⁶ "Illinois, Non-Population Census Schedules, 1850-1880," Hancock County, Illinois, mortality schedule, p. 325, enumerator's notes; (National Archives and Records Administration microfilm publication T1133, Roll NARA, Washington D.C.

¹²⁷ "Illinois, Non-Population Census Schedules, 1850-1880," Hancock County, Illinois, mortality schedule, p. 311, line 14, Hampton Loftis; (National Archives and Records Administration microfilm publication T1133, Roll NARA, Washington D.C.

THE 1850s AND BEYOND

Five years after the 1850 federal census, the state of Illinois conducted an 1855 census. Nathan's household included two males between the ages of 10-20, one male between the age 70 and 80 (Nathan, Sr.) and one female age 50-60 (Keziah age 53). Joseph Pettit was counted as head of his own household with one male age 30-40 and one female age 40-50.¹²⁸

By 1855 Nathan was approaching his 80th year of life. With the blessing of a long life came some unwanted heartache. He had outlived a tragic number of his own children, their spouses, and grandchildren. Such was life in the 1800s, especially on the western frontier. By 1856 Nathan's wife Levina, his children Jemima Pettit Brashears, Thomas Pettit, Rachel Pettit Tomlinson, Catherine Pettit Loftis, and Nathan Pettit, Jr., had all passed away. They fell in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois and their graves have since been lost to the ages.

Despite the personal loss, Nathan had experienced a lot of blessings. He was not alone in life. Now in his late seventies, the old man probably realized he could no longer outwork his son Joseph in the field, but he still probably enjoyed his company. Records indicate he spent most of his time working at the mill while Joseph ran the cattle and hogs. Nathan undoubtedly enjoyed the meals prepared by his daughter Keziah as he settled in for the evening. From his front porch, Nathan could survey his 80-acre spread and plan all the work that needed to be done tomorrow. Perhaps in these quiet moments his mind would take him back to his early years in the back country of South Carolina. His boyhood home was hundreds of miles away; over the rugged mountains he had once led his family through. It would have seemed like a lifetime ago. The threat of being scalped by the Cherokee, the war for independence, the place where he met and married his wife and welcomed ten children into the world—this wild and wonderful place was where Nathan became a man. He had left it behind, but it was still a part of him. He had gone west in search of opportunities and tamed the frontier, forging a successful farm in an undeveloped land. Every day brought new challenges and every night brought him much needed rest. He had watched the seasons come and go. Seedtime and harvest. Summer and winter. He knew every season had its inescapable expectations, and Nathan was now in the winter season of his life.

Nathan became ill in March of 1856. In April, he requested help from Joseph Tillburn, his grandson-in-law, in making out his last will and testament.¹²⁹ He must not have been

¹²⁸ "State Census 1855, Hancock County", Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, Illinois Secretary of State, Image Group 976183, p. 4, line 10, images, *FamilySearch*, (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:61HH-DPZ>); Nathan Pettit and Joseph Pettit

¹²⁹ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *ibid*; "1856, in March and April for nursing and plain medicine for Nathan Pettit in his last sickness \$30.00. In April for attempts or efforts to make the will of Nathan Pettit at his request \$35.00."

satisfied with the final draft because no signed will was ever produced. Mr. Tillburn attended to him throughout March and April of that year “nursing” him and giving him medicine.

Sometime in early May in the year 1856, the old pioneer, Nathan Pettit, died at his home in Hancock County, Illinois.¹³⁰ He was 79 years old.



¹³⁰Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *ibid*; “May 8, 1856... eight dollars for coffin for Nathan Pettit”

AFTERWORD

Nathan died intestate and the court appointed a local man named John Banks as the administrator. He ran the customary advertisement in the newspaper in Carthage. Several creditors filed claims against the estate including Keziah and Joseph for their years of labor. An inventory was taken and sale conducted of household items. The heirs filed suit and the court demanded the sale of Nathan Pettit's land in May of 1858 to cover the claims.¹³¹ The home tract passed into the hands of Joseph Pettit. Joseph operated the farm until his death on April 15, 1868. His brother John W. was appointed as the administrator for Joseph's estate and the land was then sold to Jacob D. Stomp by John W. Pettit in 1870.¹³²

With the death of Joseph all that was left of the Nathan Pettit place in Rocky Run was the name of the creek. Modern-day maps still show "Petit" Creek meandering through the section of land that once belonged to Nathan Pettit and his family.

None of the old structures remain today, but surprisingly it seems the mill may have stood on Pettit Creek into the early 1900s. Local resident Gwen Barry, who owns land that adjoins the old home tract, recounted stories passed to her from an older generation that lived there. She gave The Pettit Research Project the following details:¹³³

Mrs. Conover told us there was a mill across the road from her right on the creek. Never looked so I don't know if there are traces of it.

Mrs. Conover (elderly lady) also told us there was a house and barn on our back property, which is across the road from the mill.

The Mrs. Conover she referred to owned property south and west of where the county road intersects Pettit Creek. This road consistently appears in the same basic location on all maps going back to at least 1859. Based on her description, it seems likely the mill was just north of the bridge over the road and back up the creek. The location Mrs. Conover described corresponds precisely with one of the 80-acre tracts originally purchased by Joseph Pettit in 1835.

On the Pettits' land, the creek only passed through the southeastern corner of the property which narrows the possible site of the mill seat down to a small area. After leaving the Pettits' old tract, Pettit Creek currently runs through the northern section of the Barrys' land.

¹³¹ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the Circuit Clerk, Carthage, Illinois, Chancery Records, Ibid.

¹³² Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Record Book, Volume 86, 1870-1871, Family History Library Film 3523501403, Roll 58, Image Group 8203236, Filmed 13 Feb 1974, pp. 15-16, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLR-6336-X>); Deed of John W. Pettit to Jacob D. Stomp

¹³³ Gwen Barry to Brandon Pettit, 11 Jan 2023, letter, The Pettit Research Project questionnaire response returned.

Mrs. Barry described finding various artifacts that date to the pioneer period around this area. She stated:

Found thousands of broken crock pieces, window glass, dishes, bottles, and glass and metal ware too; on the acre where the homestead was.

I found a rubber button dated 1853 and a shard of a plate with the same date.

The 1853 button and plate date back to a time when Nathan Pettit still tended to the mill, when Joseph worked the farm, and when Keziah took care of domestic duties.

FAMILY EPILOGUE

Mother Levina Pettit

Levina, Nathan's wife, was born between 1780 and 1790.¹³⁴ If she was the mother of all the known children, then she would have been born closer to 1780 since their son Thomas was born in 1800. Levina had moved with Nathan from Spartanburg County, South Carolina to Butler County, Ohio to Vermilion County, Illinois, to Ralls County, Missouri. She died there on December 20, 1834. She was by his side as they covered nearly 1,000 miles of ground before finally reaching her oldest daughter's home in Ralls County. Levina never saw the home Nathan built in Hancock County, Illinois, where he would spend his remaining years running a successful farm and mill.

Jemimah Pettit Brashears

Jemimah Pettit was born in South Carolina around 1797. She married Solomon Brashears. They did not move in 1829 with Nathan but settled in Ralls County, Missouri two years later in 1831. They prospered there, raising a large family who were all sons. Their known children were Joshua Pettit, Joberry, Albert Gallatin, Gowan Clayton, Francis Marion, Doctor Wiley, William Riley, David Lee, James C., and Tyre R. Solomon traveled to Spartanburg County, South Carolina in 1848 to visit family. His brother Meredith Brashears returned with him, moving his family to Ralls County before the 1850 census was conducted. That census shows the household of Meridith Brashears in Ralls County with a 17-year-old John Pettit under his roof.¹³⁵ Jemima Pettit Brashears, the mother of at least ten children, two of which were twins, died sometime in 1853 in Ralls County. She would have been in her late fifties. She is thought to be buried at the nearby Bethel Church cemetery in an unmarked grave.¹³⁶ Solomon died on October 7, 1857. It was said that he "worked himself to death"

¹³⁴ 1830 U.S. Census, Vermilion County, Illinois, population schedule, p. 224, line 26, household of Nathan Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M19, Roll 25, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹³⁵ John's parents have not been conclusively identified. The census states he was born in South Carolina around 1833. One possibility is he was Meridith's nephew through Meridith's sister Elizebeth. Elizabeth is believed to have married Solomon Pettit, the son of Nathan's older brother John (b1771). Family lore is that Solomon Pettit died from scarlet fever around 1848 which may also explain Meridith taking him into his home.

¹³⁶ Mel Brashears, Personal Files of Mel Brashears, no date, San Jose, CA 95138; Mel Brashears conducted extensive research at the old homesite and surround locations in efforts to identify graves. It was his belief that Jemima was buried at Bethel Church cemetery.

tending to cattle and putting up hay.¹³⁷ He is believed to have been laid to rest at the old Hazel Green cemetery in Clay, Missouri.¹³⁸

Thomas Pettit

Thomas Pettit was born in South Carolina around 1800. He married Nancy and remained in Butler County, Ohio, when Nathan moved on to Vermilion County, Illinois, in 1830. Thomas and Nancy Pettit had two children: Austin Pettit, born in South Carolina in 1828, and Benjamin F. Pettit born in June of either 1835 or 1836, in Ohio. Thomas Pettit died sometime before April 19, 1837 –the date his widow married James A. VanHorn in Butler County. James VanHorn died shortly after the marriage leaving the widow with two Pettit boys and two VanHorn children, Abijah and Elizabeth F. In 1850 Nancy VanHorn was the head of her own home in Oxford, Ohio. In the home were three of her children, Austin Pettit, Abijah VanHorn and Elizabeth VanHorn. Her son Benjamin F. Pettit had been taken in by Joel Fithian, a local doctor.¹³⁹

Austin Pettit was confusingly identified as “Oscar” in Nathan’s probate packet. To add to the confusion, there was actually an Oscar Pettit in Ohio of similar age that was misidentified by researchers as Nathan’s grandson. This Oscar had no sons. As none of Nathan’s other grandsons produced male children that had issue, Nathan’s male Pettit line was considered extinct by researchers for many years. However, in 2025 it was discovered that the name was actually Austin, not Oscar.¹⁴⁰ The correct Austin Pettit was found, and it was also discovered that he had living Pettit descendants. Nathan’s male line did not die out and in fact lives on through the several descendants of Austin Pettit.

Rachel Pettit Tomlinson

Rachel Pettit was born around 1802 in South Carolina. She married an unknown Tomlinson and had one child, Hannah Tomlinson. According to Nathan Pettit’s probate papers, they were thought to have lived somewhere in Tennessee. Rachel died before 1856.

¹³⁷ Mel Brashears, Personal Files of Mel Brashears, no date, San Jose, CA 95138; Family records passed down to Mel Brashears state Solomon Brashears “worked himself to death caring for his cattle and putting up hay.” He died of a “congested chill.”

¹³⁸ Mel Brashears, email message to Frank Wilfey and Sonja Reece, 2 Jun 2008, Trip to Adair County.

¹³⁹ It is noteworthy that in 1841, a young attorney by the name of Abraham Lincoln would make a name for himself in Vermilion County, Illinois. He began taking cases there in Danville in 1841. He gave a senate campaign speech in 1858 from the home of Doctor William Fithian in Danville. This doctor Fithian was a distant cousin to the Dr. Fithian who took Benjamin Pettit into his home.

¹⁴⁰ EStevens and Brandon Pettit, “Austin S Pettit,” *The Pettit Research Project Genealogy Forum*, 19 Jul 2025, <https://forum.pettitresearch.com/d/90-austin-s-pettit>

A Lemuel Tomilinson is listed on the same page of 1830 census Vermilion County census as Nathan Pettit, Hampton Loftis, and William Pettit. There are several children in his home. His relationship, if any, with Rachel Pettit or whether he may have been her husband has not been determined.

Keziah Pettit Wells

Keziah Pettit was born in South Carolina around 1803. Keziah married Anthony Wells on April 5, 1836, in Ralls County, Missouri.¹⁴¹ Some believe she had an earlier marriage, but her maiden name was shown as “Pettit” on the marriage certificate suggesting this was her first husband. Not much is known about Anthony Wells, but he is thought to have died or moved on by 1844. In 1844 Keziah and a boy believed to be her son, James Wells, moved in with Nathan Pettit in Hancock County, Illinois. Keziah took care of the housework for him there for 12 years until his death.¹⁴² She then moved in with the family of her niece, Elizabeth Humphrey, in Fountain Green, Hancock County, Illinois. The 1870 census in Fountain Green lists her as a 60-year-old “domestic servant” in the home of James T. and Elizabeth (Loftis) Humphery.¹⁴³ Also, in the home was 38-year-old Lavina Taylor who was previously a Pettit either by marriage or by birth.¹⁴⁴ Keziah has not been located in the 1860 census or in any records after 1870. She is believed to have died before 1880. There is speculation that she was the mother of at least two children, both possibly born out of wedlock.¹⁴⁵

Catherine Pettit Loftis

Catherine Pettit was born in South Carolina around 1809. She married Hampton Loftis probably in Spartanburg County, South Carolina. They moved with Nathan and his family to Vermilion County, Illinois, in 1829 and lived near one another in Hancock County, Illinois.¹⁴⁶ Catherine Pettit Loftis died in 1847 while residing in Hancock County leaving at least four

¹⁴¹ Ralls County (Missouri), Ralls County Records, New London, Missouri, Index to Marriage Records 1821-1879, Family History Library Film 972908, Roll 21, Filmed 24 Feb 1975, p. 131, images, Image group 7514136, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G98M-B3QN>); Keziah Pettit marriage to Anthony Wells.

¹⁴² Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *Ibid*.

¹⁴³ 1870 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, population schedule, Fountain Green Township, p. 3, dwelling 14, family 14, line 17, households of James T. Humphry, NARA microfilm publication M593, Roll 226 National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁴⁴ Lewis County (Missouri), Lewis County Records, Monticello, Missouri, Marriage Records, Volume 2, 1848-1863, Family History Library Film 1015324, Roll 52, Filmed 3 Jun 1976, p. 138, images, Image group 7515686, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G989-SQKT>); W. D. Taylor marriage to Lavina Pettit.

¹⁴⁵ See Appendix A information on James Pettit and Lavina P. Pettit.

¹⁴⁶ 1840 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, population schedule, p 222A, line 15, household of Hampton Loftis, NARA microfilm publication M704, Roll 60, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

children for her husband to tend to. The children were Lavina Loftis who married James T. Humphrey, William Daniel Loftis, Olive Loftis who married a Caldwell and Elizabeth Loftis who married first Joseph Tilburn^{147, 148} and second James T. Humphry (widower of her sister Lavina).^{149, 150} Hampton Loftis remarried but died of bilious fever in September of 1849.¹⁵¹ Two of the Loftis children, William Daniel and Olive, were taken in by Nathan Pettit. Lavina Loftis went to stay with her uncle John W. Pettit and his wife Liddie in Sullivan County, Missouri.¹⁵² William Daniel Loftis was still a minor under age 21 when Nathan passed away and the Hancock County Court appointed R. S. Montague, Esquire, as his guardian for the purpose of the chancery cause.¹⁵³

Joseph Pettit

Joseph Pettit was born in South Carolina around 1810. He married Nancy B. Martin on July 6, 1837. According to the claim papers he submitted in the estate suit for Nathan, Joseph lived with Nathan from 1836 until Nathan died. In Nathan's later years, Joseph had full charge of the farm and helped with the mill. In the Illinois state census conducted on July 3, 1855, Joseph Pettit was counted as head of his own household with one male age 30-40 and one female age 40-50.¹⁵⁴ Joseph would have been forty-five at the time, so this record seems to be off by at least 5 years. Also, the identity of the female in his home has not been determined. His wife, Nancy, was last seen on record on October 27, 1837, when she

¹⁴⁷ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the Circuit Clerk, Carthage, Illinois, Chancery Records, Ibid.; Elizabeth Loftis' married name is given as Humphrey in the Hancock County estate papers of Nathan Pettit ca. 1856 but in the Chancery Court records she is listed as Elizabeth Egin [probably Agan] and then as Elizabeth Tilbourne. The marriage record to Agan has not been located, however, the marriage to James Humphreys gives her name as Elizabeth Agan. She likely first married Tilburn (who died in 1890) and divorced, then married Agan, and lastly James T. Humphreys after the death of his wife Levina who was her sister.

¹⁴⁸ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Records, 1829-1849, Family History Library Film 229486, Roll 21, Image Group 4661304, p. 170, images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-VGXZ-1>) Joseph Tilburn marriage to Elizabeth Loftis.

¹⁴⁹ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Certificates, Family History Library Film 1532141, Roll 21, Image Group 4661407, Filmed 15 Dec 1987, p. 814, images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-KSSC-2M>) James T. Humphreys marriage to Elizabeth Agan.

¹⁵⁰ 1860 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, Walker Township, population schedule, Enumeration district 73, p. 578, dwelling 4106, family 3985, line 23, household of James T. Humphrey, NARA microfilm publication M653, Roll 183, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁵¹ "Illinois, Non-Population Census Schedules, 1850-1880," Hancock County, Illinois, *ibid*.

¹⁵² 1850 U.S. Census, Sullivan County, Missouri, population schedule, Enumeration district 96, p. 665 (handwritten), dwelling 395, family 395, line 36, household of John Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M432, Roll 420, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁵³ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the Circuit Clerk, Carthage, Illinois, Chancery Records, *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁴ "State Census 1855, Hancock County", Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, Illinois Secretary of State, Image Group 976183, p. 4, line 11, images, FamilySearch, (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:61HH-DPZ>); Joseph Pettitt

appeared with her husband before the Justice of the Peace for a land deed.¹⁵⁵ She was not living with him in 1850 and may have died by this time or they may have separated. She never appeared with Joseph on any federal census records. On April 5, 1858, Joseph Pettit and Caswell Smith provided the security for the guardianship of William Holden and Jacob Holden to Sarah Holden.¹⁵⁶

He is found in the 1860 Hancock County census under the household of David Frederick. He gave his occupation as “farm laborer.” Though he was enumerated under Frederick’s home, he also had his own real estate value assessed at \$1400 –that was \$400 more than the man for whom he was working. He was a laborer for hire and apparently was not afraid of hard work. James Hill would later testify that Joseph managed the Pettit farm, but he was also frequently gone, working elsewhere too. Joseph held onto one of the original homestead tracts throughout his life. Records indicate he continued to operate the mill on Pettit Creek until the year he died.¹⁵⁷ He was recorded in the Illinois State census in 1865 for Hancock County and was shown as being between age 50 and 60 and living alone.¹⁵⁸ He died at his home on April 15, 1868, and left “no widow, no children.”¹⁵⁹ His estate was administered by his brother John W. Pettit.

Nathan Pettit Junior

Nathan Pettit, Jr., was born around 1812 in South Carolina. He married Polly Ann Zink in Hancock County on February 9, 1843. By 1850 he was living without Polly Ann in his father’s house. He was deceased by at least 1856 but probably died much earlier. His father’s probate papers make one reference that he left an heir, but the heir was not named. The final disbursement of the estate occurred on April 16, 1860, and there is no mention of the heir of Nathan Pettit, Jr. The heir, if he or she even existed, must have been dead before the estate was settled. Nathan, Jr., either had no children or they did not survive past 1860.

¹⁵⁵ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Record Book, Volume 10E, 1837-1838, pp. 163-164; Joseph Pettit to Nathan Pettit.

¹⁵⁶ Hancock County (Illinois), Circuit Clerk, Carthage, Illinois, Probate Record, Conservators and Guardians Index, Volume 1, 1833-1943 Family History Library Film 947482, Roll 28, Image Group 4595129, Filmed 6 Mar 1974, p. 66, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939X-QL3L-G>).

¹⁵⁷ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Probate Record, Estate Packets, Family History Library Film 954296, Roll 208, Image Group 7655687, Filmed 31 Mar 1988, p. 161, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C95K-TS32-C>); Probate record of Joseph Pettit

¹⁵⁸ State Census 1865, Hancock County”, Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, Illinois Secretary of State, Image Group 469628, p13, line 10, images, *FamilySearch*, (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939V-RMS3-NX>); Joseph Pettit

¹⁵⁹ Hancock County (Illinois), Probate Record, Image Group 7655687, p. 161. Ibid, Claim of S. L. Symmonds for “sundry work on mill irons” and “sharpening mill.”

John W. Pettit

John W. Pettit was born in South Carolina around 1814. He married Isabella Martin on November 10, 1836, in Hancock County, Illinois, with David Hill as a witness. Isabella died and he married a woman who was likely her sister, Lydia Martin, on October 6, 1839, in Hancock County before magistrate Isaiah Guyman.¹⁶⁰

The next year, in 1840, he was enumerated in the Hancock County census next door to Hampton Loftis.¹⁶¹ He had no children in the home. It was only he and his new wife.

On June 29, 1849, he was granted forty acres of land in Sullivan County, Missouri for \$50.¹⁶² He soon left Illinois and spent the rest of his life in Missouri. He was living there in Sullivan County near his father-in-law Lewis Martin in 1850. That year he was enumerated on the census with his wife Lydia along with 16-year-old Levina Loftus listed as a laborer. On November 9, 1850, he sold forty acres in Sullivan County to Enoch M. Smith for \$100.¹⁶³

He was counted in Sullivan County again in the 1860 census and this time the home included a nine-year-old girl, Nancy Pettit.¹⁶⁴ Nancy was most likely John's only child.

On June 3, 1868, John and his brother Aaron jointly purchased two small tracts of land in Hancock County from John Kropp.¹⁶⁵ One was two acres and the other ten. The smaller tract may have had a home on it because it was sold for \$2400. This business was likely somehow related to the settlement of the estate of Joseph, their brother, who had died just two months prior. For the sum of \$1500, Aaron deeded his ½ interest in both recent

¹⁶⁰ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Certificates, Family History Library Film 91390246, Roll 145, Filmed 11 Dec 1987, pp. 1038, images, Image Group 4661406, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-KQQ9-M>); John Pettit marriage to Liddy Martin.

¹⁶¹ 1840 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, population schedule, p 222A, line 16, household of John Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M704, Roll 60, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁶² State of Missouri Land Grant, Office of Secretary of State (Missouri), 500,000 Acres Land Grants, Volume 3, page 1395, Roll s00141, purchaser John W. Pettit.

¹⁶³ Sullivan County (Missouri), Sullivan County Recorder of Deeds, Milan, Missouri, Volume A, 1845-1854, Family History Library Film 1009043, Roll 4, Image Group 8489264, Filmed 21 Sept 1976, p. 175, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C391-M98Q-C>); Deed of John W. Pettit to Enoch M. Smith.

¹⁶⁴ 1860 U.S. Census, Sullivan County, Missouri, population schedule, Wintersville, p. 8, dwelling 52, family 52, line 25, household of John Pettit, NARA microfilm publication T653, Roll 658, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁶⁵ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Records Volume 77, 1866-1868, Family History Library Film 954278, Roll 54, Image Group 8320196, Filmed 13 Feb 1974, p. 309, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSTM-SKJ4>); Deed of John Kropp and Eve Kropp his wife to John W. Pettit and Aaron Pettit of Hancock County.

purchases to John a few months later on October 31, 1868.¹⁶⁶ John sold both tracts to John T. Hopkins and Edward Libbee on April 8, 1870, for \$700.¹⁶⁷

As administrator of the estate of Joseph, John assumed legal power over Joseph's land which was the old 80-acre farm that once belonged to their father Nathan. On July 5, 1870, John and Lydia sold the old homestead tract in Illinois to Jacob D. Stromp for \$100.¹⁶⁸ With that sale, the original Pettit lands in Hancock County passed from the family and into obscurity leaving only the name of Pettit Creek as a memento.

Lydia's father, Lewis Martin made out his will on August 24, 1869.¹⁶⁹ In it he ordered that his estate was to be sold after the death of his wife, Ales, and proceeds to be distributed among his living children including Lydia Pettit. His property, both real and personal, was in Sullivan County. Lewis survived long enough to be counted in the 1870 Sullivan County census.¹⁷⁰ The 78-year-old farmer, his 75-year-old wife Ales, and 40-year-old daughter Ales Perkins were the only people in the home. However, John W. Pettit and Lydia were living next door. A few months later, on November 5, 1869, John and Lydia sold Anderson W. Harris 40 acres in Sullivan County for \$425.¹⁷¹ When the 1870 census was taken, John and his wife Lydia were still living in Sullivan County. His occupation was listed as a "miller," and the value of his property was a respectable \$3500.

Strangely, by the time of the 1880 census, 65-year-old John and 60-year-old Lydia had moved across the state to Big Creek Township in Taney County, Missouri and were cultivating a brand-new farm there. He was officially granted the 80 acres in Taney County

¹⁶⁶ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Records Volume 79, 1868, Family History Library Film 954275, Roll 55, Image Group 8320197, Filmed 13 Feb 1974, p. 36, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSTM-3SGB-2>); Deed of Aaron Pettit of Knox County, Missouri to John W. Pettit of Hancock County, Illinois

¹⁶⁷ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Records Volume 83, 1869-1871, Family History Library Film 954277, Roll 57, Image Group 8203235, Filmed 13 Feb 1974, p. 129, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLR-6DRF>); Deed of John W. Pettit and Lydia Pettit his wife of Hancock to John T. Hopkins and Edwar Libbee of same.

¹⁶⁸ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Record Book, Volume 86, 1870-1871, Family History Library Film 3523501403, Roll 58, Image Group 8203236, Filmed 13 Feb 1974, pp. 15-16, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLR-6336-X>); Deed of John W. Pettit to Jacob D. Stromp

¹⁶⁹ Sullivan County (Missouri), Office of the County Clerk, Milan, Missouri, Probate Records, Volume A, 1849-1878, Family History Library Film 1009128, Roll 37, Image Group 7632005, Filmed 28 Sept 1976, pp. 84-85, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-99L9-KZYG>); Will of Lewis H. Martin.

¹⁷⁰ 1870 U.S. Census, Sullivan County, Missouri, population schedule, Liberty Township, pp. 18-19, dwelling 126-127, family 126-127, households of Lewis Martin and John Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M593, Roll 822 National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁷¹ Sullivan County (Missouri), Recorder of Deeds, Milan, Missouri, Deeds, Volume M, 1867-1870, Family History Library Film 1009049, Roll 10, Image Group 8489270, Filmed 13 Jan 1977, pp. 279-280, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C391-MYJT>); Deed of John W. Pettit and Lydia Pettit his wife to Anderson W. Harris.

on September 10, 1880, for the price of \$5.00.¹⁷² Back in Sullivan County, on April 9, 1881, Lydia Pettit and John were named alongside twenty three other plaintiffs in a suit against a number of children and grandchildren to Lewis H. Martin, Lydia's late father.¹⁷³ It was alleged that William H. Martin obtained a deed "by direct fraud and falsehood" because at the time "Alice Martin was by reason of both physical and mental disability... wholly unable and incompetent to make such said deed." The suit was settled in favor of the Pettits and the other plaintiffs.

A few months later, John Pettit voluntarily relinquished his claim to the Taney County grant on September 15, 1881, and the land reverted to the state.¹⁷⁴ He may have moved back to Sullivan County but no further record of John W. Pettit has been found. He died sometime after 1881.

Aaron Pettit

Aaron Pettit was born around 1815 in South Carolina. Aaron married Sarah L. Zink.¹⁷⁵ He was living in Hancock County on April 28, 1840, when he was summoned to appear as a witness in a court case there.¹⁷⁶ Aaron Pettit and his wife Sarah were living in Houston, Adams County, Illinois, when the 1850 census was taken.¹⁷⁷ They had no children in the home. While living in Illinois they had a son named George L. born in 1851 (no issue), and a daughter Louisa Ellen born in 1853.¹⁷⁸ In the fall of 1856 a number of men helped bring in the crops on the old Nathan Pettit farm after his passing. Records show that Aaron Pettit spent three and a half days working the harvest there with his brother Joseph.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷² 1880 U.S. Census, Taney County, Missouri, population schedule, Big Creek Township, Enumeration district 125, p. 21B, dwelling 81, family 51, line 1, household of John W. Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M653, Roll 170 National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁷³ Sullivan County (Missouri), Office of the County Clerk, Milan, Missouri, Circuit Court, Volume F, 1880-1884, Family History Library Film 1009123, Roll 34, Image Group 8116984, Filmed 27 Sept 1976, pp. 452-453, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSVC-SQ53>).

¹⁷⁴ The entry shows to be "cancelled" with the additional abbreviation "reld" to the right of the entry.

¹⁷⁵ Hancock County (Illinois) Marriage Certificates, Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Deed Record Book, Volume 86, 1870-1871, Family History Library Film 1533537, Roll 65, License No 2835, Image Group 4661430, Filmed 19 Jan 1988, p. 132, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-VPP1-H>); Marriage license of John M. Anderson and Ellen L. Burch. "Mother's maiden name: Sarah Zink."

¹⁷⁶ Hancock County (Illinois), Circuit Clerk of the Circuit Court, Carthage, Probate Files 12, Item 2, Image Group 7635672, Filmed 24 Sept 1987, pp. 178, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-99LH-H87L>).

¹⁷⁷ 850 U.S. Census, Adams County, IL, population schedule, p. 244, dwelling 57, family 57, household of Aaron Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M432, Roll 97, National Archives Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁷⁸ 1860 U.S. Census, Knox County, Missouri, population schedule, Edina, p. 127, dwelling 915, family 888, line 26, household of Aaron Pettit, NARA microfilm publication M653, Roll 627, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁷⁹ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *Ibid*.

Aaron later married Barbara A. Medley in Clark County, Missouri, on August 5, 1856.¹⁸⁰ Barbara was born as Barbara Zink and had previously married a Kilpatrick and then a Medley. It is likely she was a sister to Aaron's first wife as well as a sister to Nathan Pettit, Jr.'s, wife. Aaron and Barbara had a daughter, Sarah A, born October 7, 1858, in Hancock County, Illinois.¹⁸¹ This family was recorded in the 1860 Knox County, Missouri census which included Aaron, his wife Barbara, all three Pettit children, along with a 17-year-old James Kilpatrick, 11-year-old Jacob Medley and 13-year-old Mary Medley—all children of Barbara by previous marriages.¹⁸²

After his brother Joseph died, Aaron was present on June 20, 1868, to purchase items from his estate in Hancock County. He bought a horse halter, buggy, 2000 bricks, and bed and stead.¹⁸³

He gave written permission for his daughter Louisia Ellen to wed James Birch in Hancock County on March 30, 1870, suggesting he may have returned to Rocky Run by that time.¹⁸⁴ He, Barbara, and their son George resided in Hancock County by census time in 1880 where they were enumerated in the home of their son-in-law James Birch in Rocky Run Township that year.¹⁸⁵ The *Warsaw Signal* mentioned Aaron on July 31, 1880, as someone who had unclaimed mail at the post office for over a week.¹⁸⁶

His daughter Sarah Ann married first William Trout who died in 1892 and second Nathaniel Winn. Sarah moved with her daughter's family to Odem, Texas where she passed away on August 24, 1943. Sarah consistently reported her father's birthplace as South Carolina.

Aaron spent his childhood in the backwoods of South Carolina around neighbors who had fought in the Revolutionary War with his grandfather Joshua Pettit. He moved with his family across the country to the western frontier when he was a teenager. Aaron died

¹⁸⁰ Clark County (Missouri) Marriage Records, Clark County Recorder of Deeds, Kahoka, Missouri, Marriage Record Book 1856-1872, Family History Library Film 1014944, Roll 28, Image Group 7579389, Filmed 12 May 1922, p. 98, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89XF-LWPD>); Marriage of Aaron Pettit and Barbara Medley.

¹⁸¹ Sarah Ann Winn, Death Certificate, File No. 39299, Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Austin, TX; Birthplace "Hancock Co Mo", Father "Arion Pette", Mother "Barbary Medlock", Informant "J A Winn", Location San Patricio County Texas.

¹⁸² 1860 U.S. Census, Knox County, Missouri, household of Aaron Pettit, Ibid.

¹⁸³ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Probate Record, Estate Packets, Family History Library Film 954296, Roll 208, Image Group 7655687, Filmed 31 Mar 1988, p. 144, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C95K-TS32-C>); Probate record of Joseph Pettit

¹⁸⁴ Hancock County (Illinois) Marriage Certificates, Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Certificates, Item 1, Family History Library Film 1533003, Roll 153, Image Group 4661415, Filmed 23 Dec 1987, p. 139, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-VPP1-H>); Note from Aaron Pettit to Clerk of County Court.

¹⁸⁵ 1880 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, population schedule, Rocky Run Township, p. 6B, enumeration district (ED) 79, family 50, Aaron. Pettit; NARA microfilm publication T9, Roll 211 NARA, Washington D.C.

¹⁸⁶ "Advertised Letters," *Warsaw (Illinois) Signal*, 31 Jul 1880, p. 3; "Pettit, Aron"

sometime after 1880, and with his passing the male Pettit line of Nathan disappeared from Hancock County.

Hannah Pettit Martin

Hannah Pettit was Nathan's last child. She was born in 1820 in South Carolina. Hannah married William H. Martin on June 1, 1843, in Hancock County, Illinois. She was the mother of at least eight children: Nancy J., Melissa G., Alice M., Hiram W., Rachel T., George W., and Dorah H.¹⁸⁷ She and her family are found on the 1860 census of Marion County, Missouri where they lived for a time.¹⁸⁸ Hannah Pettit Martan died before July 19, 1864, for it was on that date that William Martan married again to Amanda M. Johnson in Ralls County, Missouri.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ 1860 U.S. Census, Marion County, Missouri, population schedule, Round Grove Township, p. 53, dwelling 372, family 364, line 3, household of W. H. Martin, NARA microfilm publication M653, Roll 633, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ralls County (Missouri) Marriage Records, Ralls County Recorder of Deeds, Kahoka, Missouri, Marriage Record, Book A, 1821-1845, Family History Library Film 972909, Roll 21, Image Group 7514137, Filmed 24 Feb 1975, p. 205, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89XF-LWPD>); Marriage of Aaron Pettit and Nabra Medley.

APPENDIX A

GENEALOGY MYSTERIES SURROUNDING NATHAN PETTIT

Who Was the Mysterious William Pettit?

A William Pettit was present in Butler County, Ohio when Nathan and his son Thomas were there on the tax lists in 1829. In the 1830 Vermilion County, Illinois, census a William Pettit was present two households down from Nathan Pettit and next door to Hampton Loftis who was married to Nathan's daughter Catherine. Assuming this was the same man, his movements tracked closely with Nathan and his children. His proximity to the other Pettits in both places combined with the relative rarity of the Pettit surname and the small population of these places at the time strongly suggests a familial connection of some sort. What that connection was, is an enigma.

What is known for certain is that he was not one of Nathan's sons. Those, both living and dead, were all named in Nathan's probate files. The 1830 census, if accurate, places the year of his birth between 1800 and 1810. Given the number of children and their ages, he was likely born very close to 1800. It is also possible he should have been enumerated in the next older age bracket. In either case, he was too young to be a brother, being born well after Nathan's father, Joshua Pettit, was deceased. The most likely explanation is that he was a nephew. Nathan Pettit had several brothers who had many sons. Could one of them have fathered a William Pettit who moved with Nathan?

One serious candidate is Nathan's brother Joshua, Jr. He and his wife Judith Poole Pettit had a son named William P. Pettit. He is found in the 1830 census in Spartanburg County at the same time this William was in Illinois which casts serious doubt on him being the same William.¹⁹⁰ However, it was not uncommon for a family to be enumerated in two different places and the ages of the children of both these Williams match up. The other problem, however, is the age of William P. Pettit versus the age of William Pettit on the Vermilion County census. William P. was born around 1793.

William's father died on May 29, 1827, and his oldest son Nathan (b.1792) was the primary benefactor of the estate, having oversight of the family mill.¹⁹¹ William P. received a section

¹⁹⁰ 1830 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, South Carolina, population schedule, p. 248 (handwritten), line 8, household of William Pettit; NARA microfilm publication M19, Roll 171, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁹¹ Joshua Pettit Will, Spartanburg District, SC., South Carolina Will Transcripts, Microcopy No. 9, Series S108093, Reel 0024, Frame 00287, (Will Book B, Page 136, February 15, 1828), S.C. Department of Archives and History.

of his father's land as well but perhaps he found the arrangement inadequate. If William P. decided to head west with Nathan in 1829, he did not stay in Illinois long. He is found consistently in the records in South Carolina and all his children were born there. As noted, the census data is not harmonious regarding the age of the two Williams. This should exclude William P. from being a match to Vermilion County William, but the reliability of census data is often questionable.

Whether he went to Illinois has not been established, but William P. did have the urge to move at least once in his life. His War of 1812 pension file mentions that from 1853-1855 he lived in Hamilton County, Tennessee.¹⁹² He did in fact own and sale land there but after two years he moved back to his South Carolina tract where he spent the rest of his days. William P. Pettit is buried in the Pettit cemetery next to his wife Lucinda, as well as his parents Joshua and Judith on the land he owned near the Pacolet.¹⁹³

There are other brothers of Nathan who still must be considered as fathers of Vermilion County William. Nathan's brother Henry Pettit named his first son William. His William was born on April 21, 1784, but he died on December 10, 1785, at the age of one.^{194,195}

Nathan's brother Benjamin left two Bible records with a list of his children and their birth years.¹⁹⁶ He had no child named William. Nathan's brother Abraham was considered "a poor foolish lad" that was supported by others and had no children.¹⁹⁷ There may have also been a brother to Nathan who died in the late 1700s but if he existed and had children they would have been born well before this mystery William.¹⁹⁸

The last brother that could have possibly been Vermilion County William's father was John Pettit, born in 1771.¹⁹⁹ Census data in Spartanburg County, South Carolina for the years 1800, 1810, 1820 and 1830 reveal this John had at least six sons.²⁰⁰ To date, not a single one

¹⁹² William P. Pettit, Department of Veteran Affairs, "War of 1812 Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files," microfilm publication M313, National Archives, Record Group RG15-1812PB-Bx2698, Washington, D.C.

¹⁹³ Author is an eyewitness to the original gravestone of William P. Pettit at Pettit cemetery.

¹⁹⁴ Record for Henry Pettit, Anna or Ann Petit W5528; Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, 1800-1960; Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15, M804, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; Henry Pettit family Bible record.

¹⁹⁵ "Latest Full Color Photos -Family Bibles of Joshua Pettit (1734) and Henry Pettit (1763)", *The Pettit Research Project*, 16 July 2025, <https://pettitresearch.com/familyhistory/2025/05/20/the-latest-full-color-photos-of-the-family-bibles-of-joshua-pettit-and-henry-pettit/>

¹⁹⁶ "The TWO Bible Records of Benjamin Pettit (1769) of Spartanburg Co., SC and Their Whereabouts Today", *The Pettit Research Project*, 13 December 2020, <https://pettitresearch.com/familyhistory/2020/12/14/the-two-bible-records-of-benjamin-pettit-1769-of-spartanburg-co-sc-and-their-whereabouts-today/>

¹⁹⁷ South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research, Volume IX, Number 4, Fall 1981, p. 210.

¹⁹⁸ Latest Full Color Photos -Family Bibles of Joshua Pettit (1734) and Henry Pettit (1763)", *The Pettit Research Project*, 16 July 2025, <https://pettitresearch.com/familyhistory/2025/05/20/the-latest-full-color-photos-of-the-family-bibles-of-joshua-pettit-and-henry-pettit/>

¹⁹⁹ "John Pettit (b. 1771) Son of Joshua and Rachel Pettit of Spartanburg Co., SC", *The Pettit Research Project*, 24 October 2023, <https://pettitresearch.com/familyhistory/2023/10/16/john-pettit-b-1771-son-of-joshua-and-rachel-pettit-of-spartanburg-co-sc/>

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

of his children have been connected to him with conventional genealogical sources. Though there is ample circumstantial evidence, solid proof remains elusive. However, recent discoveries by Michael Cooley and Janet Wood at the Pettit Pilgrim Y-DNA project²⁰¹ have made a compelling case that John Pettit (b. 1771) was the father of Daniel (b. 1812) as well as Nathaniel H. (b. 1813). This has been decided through process of elimination by testing descendants of John's brothers. It is very likely John was the father of these children:

- Elijah b.~1795
- Solomon b.~1796
- Benjamin b.~1804
- Ruth b.~1807
- Daniel b.~1812
- Nathaniel H. b.~1813

Turning back to William Pettit, the 1830 census sets his birth year between 1800 and 1810. If the four minors in his home were his own children, then he most certainly would have had to have been born around the 1800 end of the timeline. One possible scenario that explains the birth years for this household based on the 1830 census is as follows:

- William Pettit born about 1800
- Wife born about 1800
- Son #1 born about 1821
- Son #2 born about 1823
- Son #3 born about 1826
- Daughter born about 1830

Taking all this into consideration, a hypothesis can be proposed for careful consideration. It is *possible* Vermilion County William Pettit was the son of Nathan's brother John Pettit (b. 1771). He would have been born around 1800 in South Carolina. He married in South Carolina. He had children in South Carolina and moved with Nathan to Ohio where he was counted on the duplicate tax rolls in 1829. He then moved to Vermilion County, Illinois, where he was counted on the 1830 census. He would have had to survive The Winter of the Deep Snow (1830-1831) and may have lost one or two of his children there.

There is another reason to consider this possibility. John's suspected children married into the same Brashears family that Nathan's children married into. They also lived very nearby. Both Elijah and Solomon married Brashears sisters, Tabitha and Elizabeth respectively. Also, it is thought that John's daughter Ruth married Isaiah Brashears.

After 1830 there is no sign of what became of Vermilion County William. One thing that must be considered is he may have moved back to Spartanburg County, South Carolina.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

There is a William Pettit found in the 1840 census there and, despite the Spartanburg Pettits being thoroughly documented, this 1840 William's connection is not known.²⁰² His neighbors in the 1840 census included Drury McAbee, Hiram McAbee, and James Silman. These men were known to own property around Fords Creek which was a branch of Fair Forest Creek probably near present-day Roebuck.²⁰³ No Pettit families were known to inhabit this particular area besides this William.

None of Vermilion County William's children have been identified by name, nor do we know his wife's name. He may have living descendants today who do not know how they connect to the larger tree. Hopefully, the story of William Pettit will one day be told in full.

Who Was James Pettit of Rocky Run?

There are faint hints of a man name James Pettit who lived at Rocky Run and who may have been related to Nathan Pettit in some way. No parents have been identified, but a number of important facts are known about him.

- He was born in Missouri between July 2, 1835, and July 1, 1836.²⁰⁴
- He was in Rocky Run at least by 1856 and probably earlier.²⁰⁵
- His name appears as a purchaser of items of the estate of Nathan Pettit in 1856.²⁰⁶
- He was sued in 1860 along with Aaron Pettit and Joseph Pettit. The subpoena implies he and Joseph Pettit resided together.²⁰⁷
- He was still in Rocky Run in 1863.²⁰⁸
- He was married on or before 1863.²⁰⁹

There is no record of the subpoena ever resulting in James Pettit appearing and giving testimony in either case, and no follow-up demands were ever made of him. The court's purpose for calling him was not because he was an heir but rather a witness. It is not likely he intended to evade the summons because he was openly present at the sale of Nathan's estate. He purchased a teapot and sugar at the sale on September 5, 1856. He also bought a

²⁰² 1840 U.S. Census, Spartanburg County, South Carolina, population schedule, p. 114, line 3, household of William Pettit; NARA microfilm publication M704, Roll 514, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

²⁰³ Spartanburg Deeds, Conveyance Book AA, p.119, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

²⁰⁴ Illinois, 4th Congressional District, Class No. 1, L-Z (Volume 2 of 5), Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865, p. 221, Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War), National Archives Identifier 109429531, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

²⁰⁵ Hancock County, Illinois probate record, Nathan Pettit, *Ibid*.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*.

²⁰⁷ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Probate Record, Estate Packets, Family History Library Film 954296, Roll 208, Image Group 7655687, Filmed 31 Mar 1988, p. 417, images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C95K-TS32-C>); Probate record of Joseph Pettit

²⁰⁸ Illinois, 4th Congressional District, NARA, *ibid*.

²⁰⁹ Illinois, 4th Congressional District, NARA, *ibid*.

black cow valued at \$26.75. If he did not live under Nathan's roof, he would likely have lived very nearby as it would have been unfeasible to transport a cow a great distance.

A lawsuit was filed against James Pettit, Aaron Pettit, and Joseph Pettit on March 2, 1860, by Alexander Goodwin "for use of Cole and Newby". The summons was returned on the same day for James and Joseph. On March 10, 1860, the court entered a judgment against them because they did not appear.²¹⁰

In the midst of The War Between the States in June and July of 1863, James was listed on a draft record in Hancock County. He was recorded as James "Petit" living in Rocky Run. He was shown to be 27 years old in June/July of 1863 and was a white male born in Missouri. He was also noted as married.²¹¹

He was never listed as an heir of Nathan Pettit. One reason for this is that he could have been a grandson, the son of one of Nathan's sons who was still living when Nathan died in 1855. However, this possibility can be dismissed. Following this train of thought, only Aaron, John W., and Joseph could be his father. Nathan's other two sons, Thomas and Nathan, Jr., preceded him in death. If James were one of their sons, he would be listed as an heir. Since Joseph had "no children" this leaves only Aaron and John W. as the possible fathers of James under this theory. John W. had no children associated with him on the 1840 census which suggests he was not James' father. Aaron and his wife Sarah had no children living with them in the 1850 census when this James would have been around 14 years old. This does not rule them out entirely but does cast serious doubt on the likelihood that James was the son of one of Nathan's boys.

Another possibility is James was the illegitimate son of one of Nathan's daughters who retained the mother's last name. Given the marriage dates and other known children of Nathan's daughters, there is only one daughter with which this would be a remote possibility and that is Keziah. In 1850 she and a young James Wells were living in the household of Nathan Pettit. This James Wells' birthyear and birthplace match those of James Pettit. It is possible James Wells was Keziah's son who adopted the name James Pettit since he was raised by the Pettit family.

Adding one more layer of confusion to the enigma is a deposition by one James *Hill* on behalf of Keziah's suit against the estate in Nathan's probate case. James Hill stated:

Known the Pettits, lived with them some 12 years. Jos made the old mans his home. Jos was not on the place all the time. The stock bought by Jos was mostly paid for from the farm. Jos paid \$4.00 for out of wheat crops except a horse 4 years old. When everything was

²¹⁰ Hancock County (Illinois), Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Probate Record, Estate Packets, Family History Library Film 954296, Roll 208, Image Group 7655687, Filmed 31 Mar 1988, p. 416, images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C95K-TSSW-S>); Probate record of Joseph Pettit

²¹¹ Illinois, 4th Congressional District, NARA, *ibid*.

sold off the farm, Jos sold it. The old man gave Jos the money he got from the mill. I was about 8 years old when I went to the old mans. Left in June 1856.

Strangely, James Hill's description would put him at the Pettit home in 1850 at a time when only James Wells is shown on the census. James Hill's birth year also aligns with that of James Wells and James Pettit. These three men could all be one in the same. If so, the use of three different surnames demands an explanation.

Recall that Keziah Pettit married Anthony Wells on April 5, 1836. The latest James Wells was born, according to all combined sources, would have been just shy of three months later on July 1, 1836. That is the *latest* he could have been born though he may have been born well before this. If he were born out of wedlock, then it would not have been uncommon for him to take the mother's last name of Pettit. If he were born just after the marriage it would have been obvious he was conceived out of wedlock but still may have taken Anthony Wells' last name. Additionally, if he was the illegitimate son of an unknown Mr. Hill²¹² and his mother married Anthony Wells, he may have used any one of the three surnames.

All of this is speculation and meant only to drive more research. Hopefully the name of Keziah Pettit has not been besmirched in this musing.

Setting aside the potential for scandal, perhaps an equally probable theory is this James Pettit was the son of the mysterious William Pettit or some other Pettit nephew from Spartanburg County. He may have been orphaned and taken in by Nathan's family. As a result, the charitable Keziah may have been his de facto mother.

Who Was Lavina Pettit born in 1830?

An associated Pettit female with unknown origins graced the records of Ralls County in 1847. Her name was Levina P. Pettit, but she was not the wife of Nathan. She was born in Vermilion County, Illinois, in 1830.²¹³ Her parents were identified on her marriage license in 1885 as William Thompson and "Petit." She reported that they were both from South Carolina.^{214,215}

According to a Ralls County, Missouri marriage record, this Levina Pettit married William D. Taylor on April 28, 1847. She was listed as "Miss," and her maiden name was given as

²¹² A Davis Hill was the Justice of the Peace in Hancock County who witnessed the marriage of John W. Pettit and his bride Isabella Martin in 1836.

²¹³ Decatur County (Iowa), Decatur County Recorder and Vital Records Registrar, Leon, Iowa, Marriage Index, Book A, p. 104, Lavina Thompson marriage to Joseph Moorman.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ 1880 U.S. Census, Decatur County, Iowa, population schedule, Decatur City Township, p. 30, enumeration district (ED) 57, dwelling 19, family 19, Lavina Thompson in the home of James D. Stewart; NARA microfilm publication T9, Roll 337 NARA, Washington D.C.

Pettit. After the marriage they moved to Hancock County, Illinois where they are found living together in the 1850 census.²¹⁶ She was 20 years old and said to have been born in Illinois. There were no children in the home.

In 1870 she is found in the company of Nathan's daughter Keziah. Keziah and Lavina were living in the home of Keziah's niece, Elizabeth Humphrey,²¹⁷ in Fountain Green, Hancock County, Illinois.²¹⁸ At age 40 she would marry again, this time to Marandus Thompson, on November 4, 1870, in Hancock County, Illinois.²¹⁹ By 1880 she was in Decatur County, Iowa, in the home of James A. Stewart where she was enumerated in that year's census.²²⁰ Five years later, on September 22, 1885, she wed Joseph Moorman in Decatur County, Iowa.²²¹

If the information recorded in her 1885 marriage record is correct, and her father was William Thompson from South Carolina and her mother was an unnamed Pettit also from South Carolina, then her maiden name should have been Thompson and not Pettit. However, her first marriage in Ralls County, Missouri lists her as Miss Lavina Pettit. Again, it must be noted that the most common reason in the 1830s for the child to take the mother's last name was because the child was born out of wedlock. This Levina Pettit could have been Keziah Pettit's daughter born before she married Anthony Wells.

One other possibility is that Levina Pettit was the daughter of the mystery William Pettit who was in Vermilion County, Illinois, in 1830. On the census that year he had one daughter and she was born around 1830 just like this Lavina. If William Pettit was a nephew of Nathan Pettit and he had a daughter, Levina Pettit, born in 1830 in Vermilion County, Illinois, he may have died shortly after the 1830 census. Perhaps the marriage record in 1885 confused some of the details. Instead of William "Thompson", it should have said William "Pettit" and perhaps Thompson should have been listed as the bride's last name since she had previously married Marandus Thompson. If she was William Pettit's daughter and something happened to William, Nathan's family may have taken his daughter into their home where Keziah may have helped raise her. When Nathan died, since she was not one of

²¹⁶ 1850 U.S. Census, Hancock County, IL, population schedule, p. 328A, dwelling 817, family 818, William B. Taylor NARA microfilm publication M432, Roll 109, National Archives Records Administration, Washington D.C.

²¹⁷ Elizabeth was the daughter of Catherine Pettit.

²¹⁸ 1870 U.S. Census, Hancock County, Illinois, population schedule, Fountain Green Township, p. 3, dwelling 14, family 14, line 17, households of James T. Humphry, NARA microfilm publication M593, Roll 226 National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

²¹⁹ Hancock County (Illinois) Marriage Certificates, Office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Carthage, Illinois, Marriage Record, Volume B, 1862-1890, Family History Library Film 954178, Roll 3, Image Group 4661437, Filmed 29 Jan 1974, p. 75, images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939J-V1T2-R>); Marandus Thompson marriage to Mrs. Lavina Taylor

²²⁰ 1880 U.S. Census, Decatur County, Iowa, population schedule, Decatur City Township, p. 30, enumeration district (ED) 57, dwelling 19, family 19, Lavina Thompson in the home of James D. Stewart; NARA microfilm publication T9, Roll 337 NARA, Washington D.C.

²²¹ Decatur County (Iowa), Marriage Certificates, Decatur County Recorder and Vital Records Registrar, Leon, Iowa, Marriage Record, Book A, Certificate 1513; Lovina Thompson Pettit to Joseph Moorman.

his descendants, she would not be named as an heir in his estate but her connection to the family would still be close. Though possible, this sharply conflicts with the marriage record that lists her father as William Thompson. That fact, and the fact that there was multiple William Thompsons from Spartanburg County near the Pettits, are hard to overcome.

Who Was the John Pettit with an Unknown Past?

A young John Pettit is found in the 1850 census Ralls County, Missouri home of Merida Brashears. He shows to have been born in South Carolina in 1833. As noted elsewhere, Solomon Brashears left Ralls County to visit his old stomping grounds in South Carolina in 1848. His brother Merida followed him back and it appears he brought this John Pettit with him. John may have been the son of one of Merida and Solomon's sisters who may have married a Pettit. An older John Pettit (b.1771) was the brother of Nathan and had at least two sons who are thought to have married Brashears girls. His son Elijah Pettit married Tabaita Brashears and Solomon married Elizabeth Brashears.²²²

Elijah Pettit was out of the picture, possibly dead by 1843.²²³ Solomon Pettit is thought to have died from scarlet fever around 1848.²²⁴ Elijah's children are known by name, but

Solomon's are not. Perhaps this younger John Pettit (b.1833) was Solomon's son or perhaps he belonged to the mystery William.

Members of Nathan Pettit's Household Through the Years

When considering all these possible grandchildren a closer look at some of the census data is warranted. After Nathan left South Carolina there was not a single census in which he was counted where he did not have someone living under his roof besides his wife and children. The identity of these additional people is only given in the 1850 census.

²²² George Pettett, *Pettett and Pettit: This Family Business*, (Wolf City, Texas: Henington Publishing Company, 2001) pp. 61-71

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ The cause of death and date of death were noted in the research of Mel R. Brashears but the sources he relied on for this fact statement are not known. Mr. Brashears passed away on February 14, 2024.

<u>1830 Vermilion County, Illinois</u>		
Males		
Age	Birth Year	Identity?
(1) 5-10	1820-1825	grandson?
(2) 10-15	1815-1820	Aaron, John W.
(1) 15-20	1810-1815	Nathan, Jr.
(1) 20-30	1800-1810	Joseph
(1) 50-60	1770-1780	Nathan, Sr.
Females		
Age	Birth Year	Identity?
(1) under 5	1825-1830	granddaughter?
(1) 10-15	1815-1820	Hannah
(1) 40-50	1780-1790	Levina (wife)

<u>1840 Hancock County, Illinois</u>		
Males		
Age	Birth Year	Identity?
(1) 15-20	1820-1825	grandson?
(1) 20-30	1810-1820	Nathan, Jr., or Aaron
(1) 60-70	1770-1780	Nathan, Sr.
Female		
Age	Birth Year	Identity?
(1) 15-20	1820-1825	Hannah

<u>1850 Hancock, Illinois Census</u>		
Age	Birth Year	Name
76	1774-1775	Nathan Pettit, Sr.
47	1802-1803	Keziah Wells
14	1835-1836	James Wells
38	1811-1812	Nathan Pettit, Jr.
40	1809-1810	Joseph Pettit
12	1837-1838	Daniel Loftus
9	1840-1841	Olive Loftus

<u>1855 Illinois State Census</u>		
Males		
Age	Birth Year	Possible Identity
(2) 10-20	1835-1845	James Wells and Daniel Loftus
(1) 70-80	1775-1785	Nathan, Sr.
Female		
Age	Birth Year	Possible Identity
(1) 50-60	1795-1805	Keziah

APPENDIX B

SOLOMON BRASHEARS AND HAP MCCOLLUM FAMILY BIBLE

Researcher Mel Brashears provided the following information regarding the family Bible that was used by Solomon Brashears. He made a comparison of the Bible record and tombstone inscriptions. Below are Mel Brashears' comments in his own words.

Another mystery is the birth dates of Solomon's children. I discovered this reading the inlays in Solomon's Bible that I now have after Dad's death. The Bible documents dates approximately three to five years earlier than what other family records state.

From tombstone and family records:

Name: Francis Marion Brashears
Birth Date: 28 May 1827
Death Date: 20 Dec 1926
Cemetery: Lick Creek

Cemetery Records of Ralls County, Missouri Volume I
Name: Gowan C. Brashears
Birth Date: 15 May 1825
Death Date: 01 Oct 1894
Cemetery: Bethel Baptist

Cemetery Records of Ralls County, Missouri Volume I
Name: Joberry Brashears
Birth Date: 02 Feb 1823
Death Date: 14 Mar 1894
Cemetery: Bethel Baptist

Cemetery Records of Ralls County, Missouri Volume I
Name: Joshua P. Brashears
Birth Date: 10 Dec 1816
Death Date: 18 Jan 1879
Cemetery: Bethel Baptist

Solomon's Bible has the following for his children:

Joshua Pettit Brashears b. 15 Dec 1811 (4 years off, month same, day off by 5 days)
Albert Gallatin (Bird) Brashears b. 13 Jul 1814
Joberry Brashears b. 2 Feb 1818 (5 years off, month & day same)
Gowan Clayton Brashears b. 8 May 1821 (4 years off, month same, day off by 7 days)
Francis Brashears b. 20 May 1823 (4 years off, month same, day off by 8 days)
William Riley Brashears b. 15 Nov 1826
Doctor Wiley Brashears b. 15 Nov 1826
James C. Brashears b. 24 Oct 1835
David Lee Brashears b. ca 1838 (I cannot read the date)
Tyre Brashears b. 27 Mar 1840

I have no answer to this mystery but continue to research it. Interestingly, the Bible (published in Boston in 1813) was previously owned by Hap MCollum. He wrote births and deaths on the front inlays. These writing are:

Hogan MCollum was born August the 10th, 1809
Andrew MCollum was born November the 5th, 1811
Ephraim MCollum was born July the 30th, 1812
Jackson MCollum was born December the 5th, 1814
Metilda McCollum was born March 21st (?), 1817

Jackson MCollum died June the 4th 1816

I have researched the McCollums and indeed they lived in the Spartanburg area near Solomon and Jemima. My first theory was that the name McCollum might be the missing maiden of Jemima Mother. There is a listing in Solomon's handwriting that "Mother Pettit died(ed) December the 20th, 1834 implying that she accompanied them on the trip to Missouri. There is also two unreadable letters before December that I think are dc, an attempt at December with the start over of December with a lower case d just after the two letters. I considered that the two letters are Sc for South Carolina but I believe it is dc as the two d's are identical.

-Mel Brashears

Solomon Brashears with his family, left
 South Carolina Nov. 15 - 1830 - (their twins -
 Uncle Doc & Uncle Bill being one year old that
 day) & came through in a wagon - landed
 in Edwardsville - Illinois in the fall -
 When a snow (three feet) fell & they remained
 there all winter. Wild turkeys sat in
 the trees till they died, and the deer could
 find nothing to eat except brush, and the
 snow too deep for them to get about &
 many starved to death.
 They crossed the river at Alton
 May 1st and came to Tallah County
 Mo. & visited with his brother William
 for a short time - when they came to
 the farm where they lived & reared
 their family.

"Note Found in Sarah Jo's Files Written by Some Unknown Member of the Family."

APPENDIX C

PETTIT FAMILY MARRIAGES

Nathan’s Parents and Family

Nathan Pettit was the son of Joshua and Rachel Pettit of Spartanburg County, South Carolina. Joshua’s family was known to contain the following children:

<u>Children of Joshua Pettit</u>	<u>Their Spouses</u>
1. Henry Sr Pettit	Anna Poole
2. Joshua Pettit	Judith Poole
3. Hannah Pettit	
4. Mary Pettit	died young
5. Benjamin Pettit	Elizabeth Hindman
6. John Pettit	[Unknown]
7. Nathan Pettit	Levina [Unknown]
8. Abraham Pettit	never married
9. Rachel Pettit	

Nathan Pettit’s Children -Marriage Reference Guide

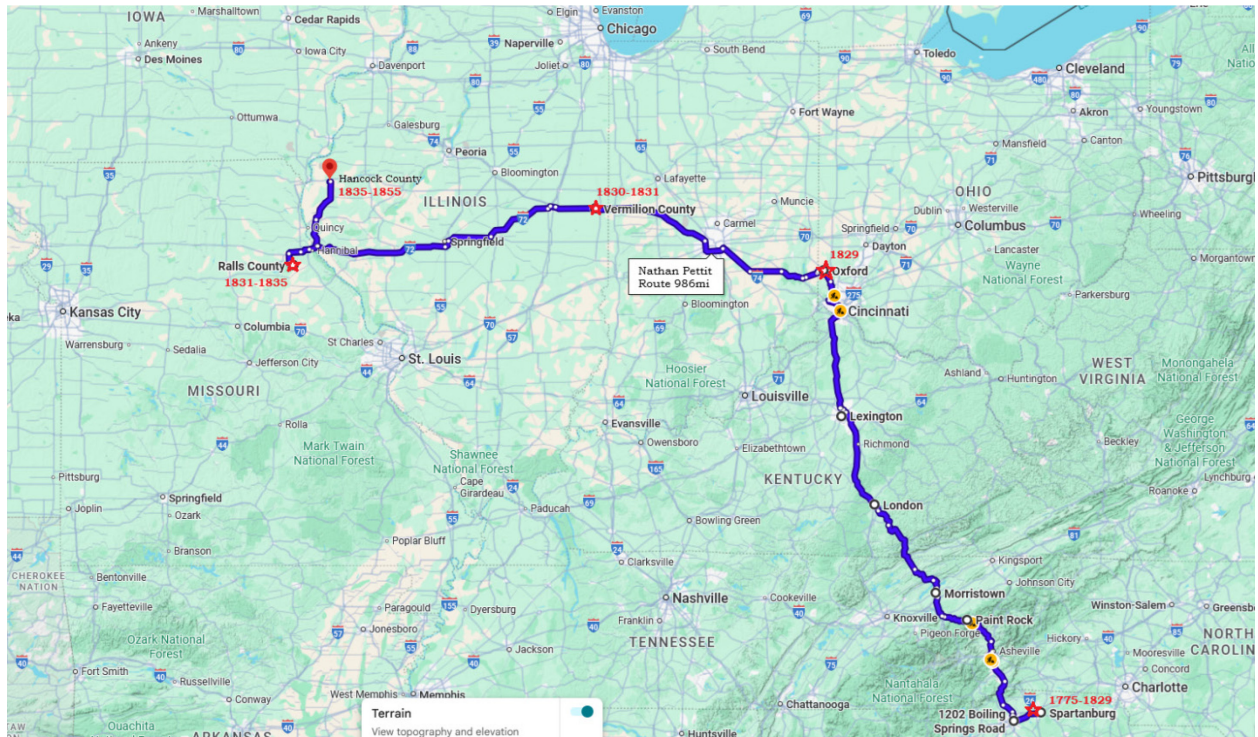
<u>Children of Nathan (b. 1775)</u>	<u>Their Spouses</u>
1. Jemima Pettit	Solomon Brashears
2. Thomas Pettit	Nancy [Unknown]
3. Rachel Pettit	[Unknown] Tomlinson
4. Keziah Pettit	Anthony Wells
5. Catherine Pettit	Hampton Loftis
6. Joseph Pettit	Nancy B. Martin
7. Nathan Pettit Jr.	Polly A. Zink
8. John W. Pettit	1) Isabella Martin 2) Lydia Martin
9. Aaron Pettit	1) Sarah L. Zink 2) Barbara A. Zink
10. Hannah Pettit	William H. Martin

Four Martins married into the Pettit family. Lydia and William H. Martin are proven to be siblings and the children of Lewis Hiram Martin and his wife Ales of Sullivan County,

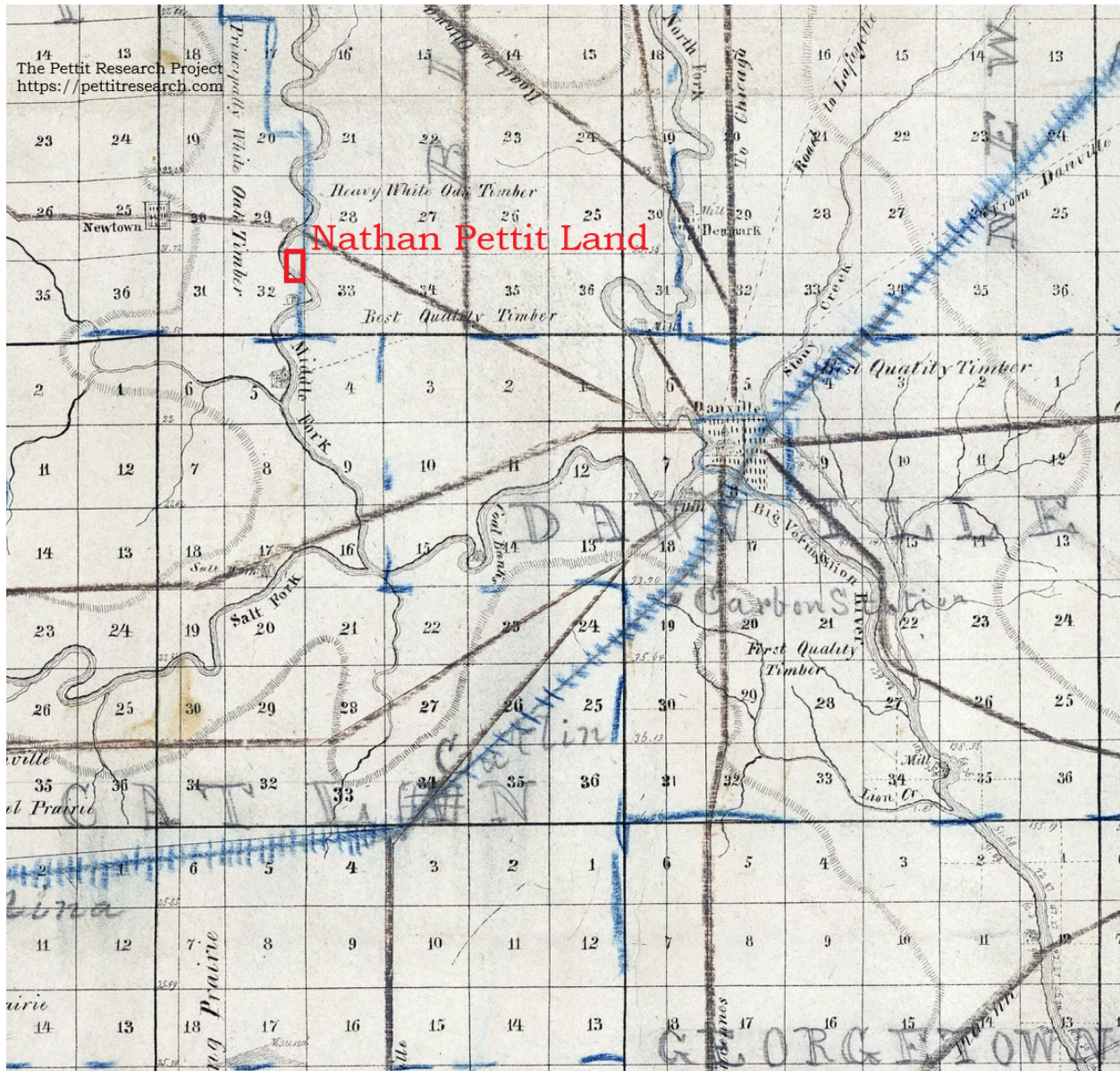
Missouri. Nancy and Isabella most likely died before their father. There were also at least three girls from the Zink family who married Pettits. They were from Indiana.

APPENDIX D

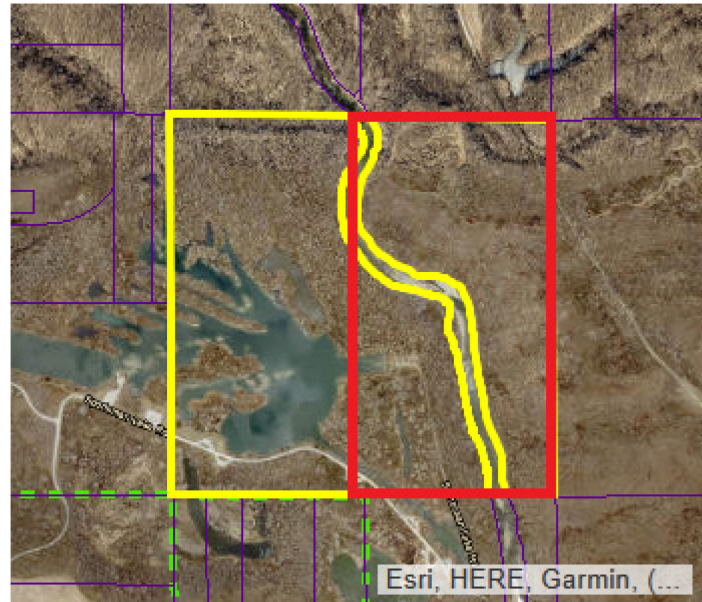
ORIGINAL MAPS



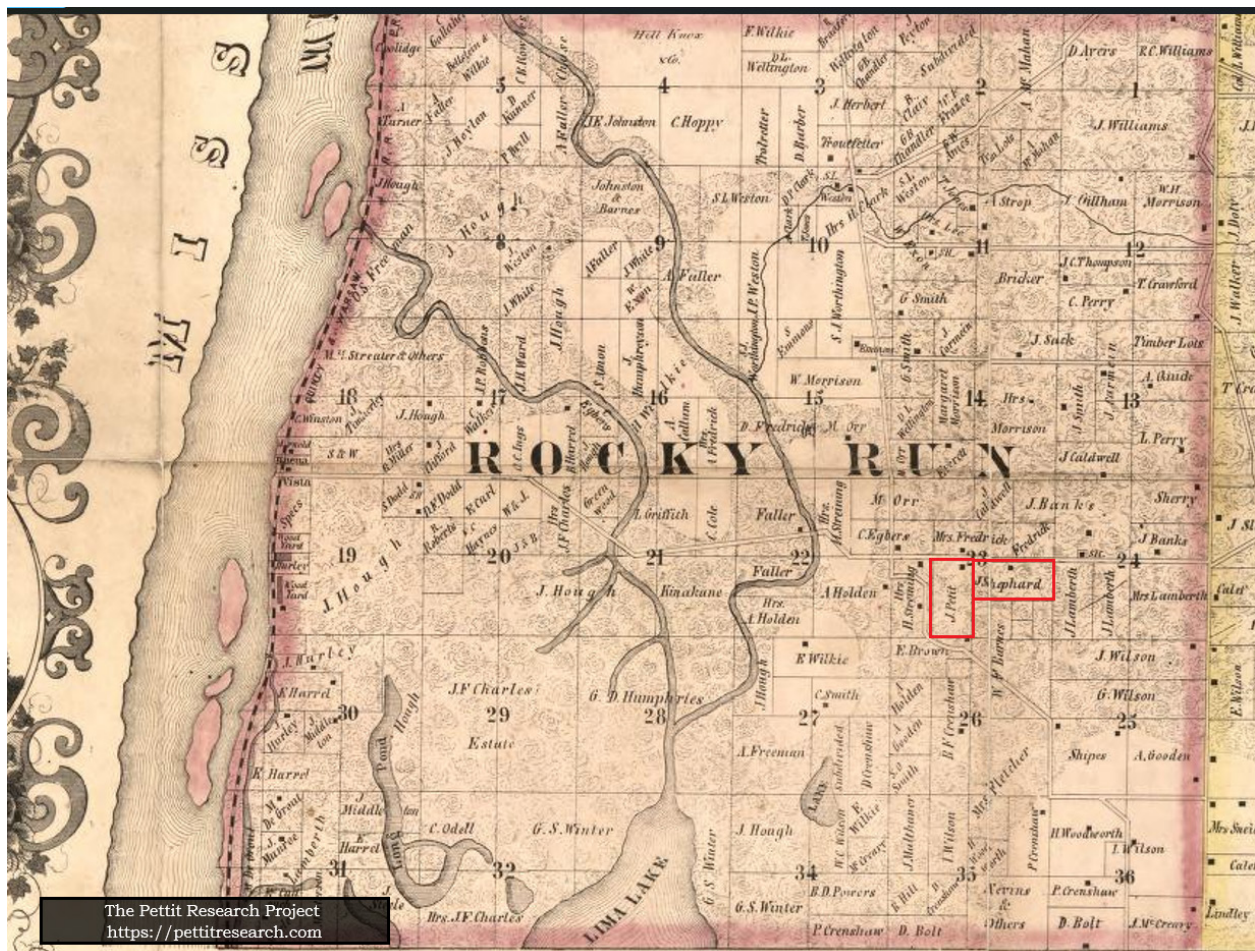
Modern map showing a rough migration route that may have been used by Nathan Pettit and his caravan in their move west from Motlows Creek in Spartanburg County, South Carolina.



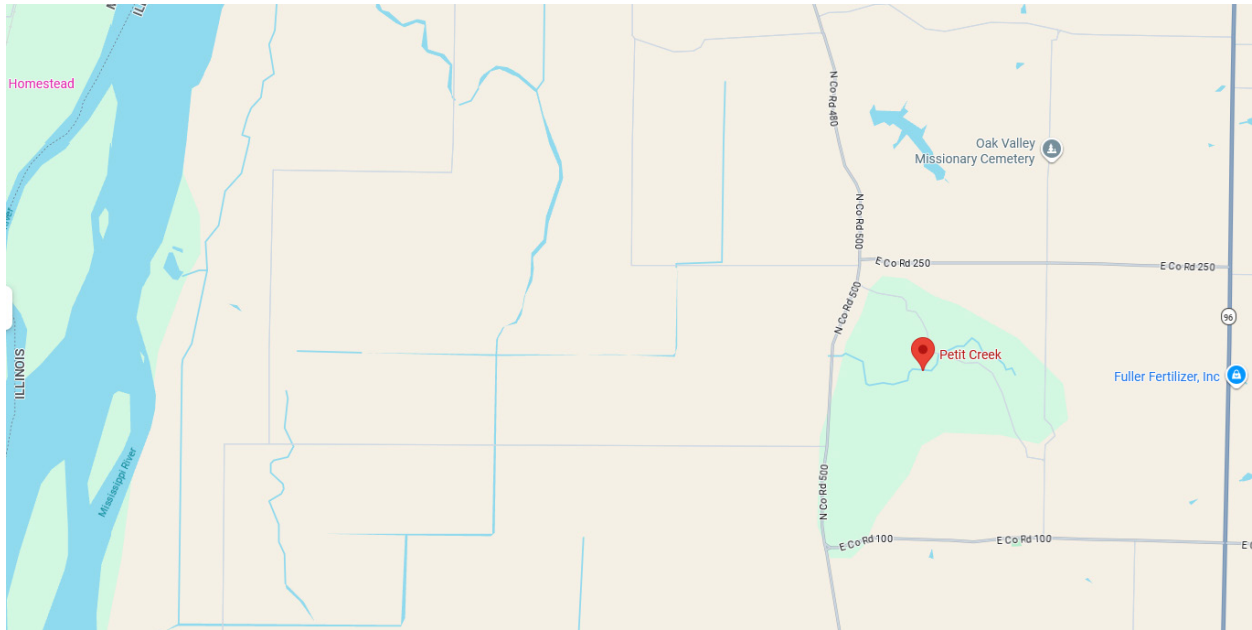
Map showing the location of Nathan Pettit's land in Vermilion County, Illinois.



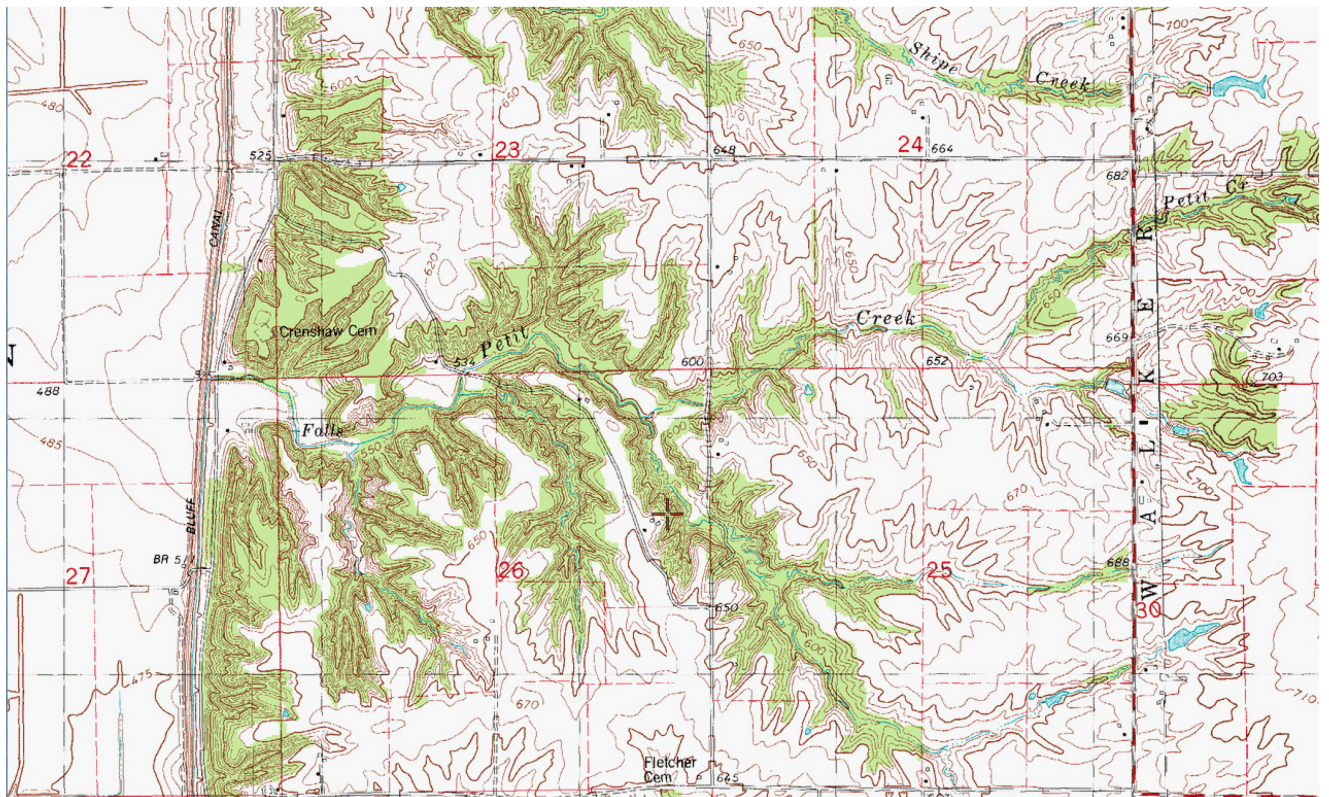
Aerial map showing an overview of Nathan Pettit's land. (red section)



Map showing the two 80-acre tracts patented to Joseph Pettit in Illinois (in red). The home and mill were located on the tract on the left.



Map showing Petit Creek in Hancock County, Illinois by the Mississippi River.



Topographic map showing Petit Creek in Hancock County, Illinois